

DOCTORAL THESIS

Storybook Schools: representations of schools and schooling in British children's fiction 1820-1880

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Introduction

Aims and rationale

According to the *Oxford Encyclopaedia of Children's Literature* (on-line edition, 2006), the term 'school story' refers to a distinct literary genre in which 'school is not just a backdrop but rather is the *raison d'être* of the novel'. It is a genre with a long pedigree. The first text of its kind is generally held to be Sarah Fielding's *The Governess; or, Little Female Academy* (1749), a book which was very favourably received and which provided a model for a significant number of the children's stories produced during the century following its publication. Sue Sims and Hilary Clare (2000) have identified over thirty such books for girls which appeared between 1749 and 1857, while Robert Kirkpatrick (2006) estimates that over a hundred stories set in boys' schools were written during the same period. The genre was therefore relatively well-established when Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's School Days* was published in 1857, to be followed by Frederic Farrar's *Eric; or, Little by Little* in 1858. More ambitious than anything that had gone before, and attracting reviews in the periodical press,¹ these two books did much to popularise the boys' school story during the second half of the nineteenth century and beyond. Epitomised in the work of such writers as Charles Hamilton, Harold Avery, Hylton Cleaver and Gunby Hadath, as well as in the story papers, the genre experienced its heyday between 1900 and 1940. The girls' school story gained prominence rather later, probably as a result of the slow growth in the development of female education. Nevertheless, by the 1930s its popularity had reached its height, with Angela Brazil, Elsie Oxenham, Dorita Fairlie Bruce and Elinor Brent Dyer all contributing to its success.

¹ See for example 'School and College Life: Its Romance and Reality.' *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 89 (1861): 131-147.

Following the Second World War (WW2), the genre began to lose some currency, perhaps because in its traditional form it had become formulaic and no longer resonated with either the aspirations or the experiences of readers. Nevertheless, reports of its demise have proved to be exaggerated. The girls' boarding school story has shown itself to be particularly resilient, as Anne Digby's Trebizon series (1978-1994) and Ann Bryant's twelve stories set at Silver Spires (2008 onwards) indicate. At the same time, as well as reissuing many books from the 1930s and 1940s, publishers such as Girls Gone By have commissioned fan fiction which continues the sagas of Brent-Dyer's Chalet School and Antonia Forest's Kingscote. The genre has also diversified both to include more stories set in co-educational and day schools, and to incorporate features of fantasy and time-slip fiction, demonstrated most successfully in the work of J.K. Rowling.

My decision to research the nineteenth-century school story has its roots in two personal enthusiasms. A working life spent mainly in and around schools has fostered a fascination with their characteristics as social entities as well as a lasting professional interest in questions of educational policy and practice. On a more personal level, a taste for girls' school stories acquired in childhood has remained with me, and I have continued to read and collect twentieth-century century school fiction as an adult.

While studying for the MA in Children's Literature, I was able to pursue this interest further, first through work on Brazil and Oxenham, and later through writing my dissertation on the novels of Forest. More importantly, perhaps, I was able to extend it historically. My reading of such early texts as Fielding's *The Governess; or, Little Female Academy* (1749) and Dorothy Kilner's *Anecdotes of a Boarding School; or, An Antidote to the Vices of those Useful Seminaries* (1790) made me aware of the origins of the school story and helped me to appreciate its significant place in the history of education more generally. In particular, I saw

how by placing a school at the centre of their narratives, these writers exploited fiction not only to entertain and teach young readers, but also to address broader issues of educational theory and practice, often directly addressing parents, teachers and policy-makers on issues as diverse as the curriculum, discipline, and the inspection and regulation of schools. Their immediate successors continued to use the school story in this way, developing it as a vehicle for both the promotion of an ideal and for the exposure of perceived shortcomings in contemporary models of schooling.

This seriousness of purpose was sustained by many later writers, yet it has received little critical recognition. Apart from *Tom Brown's School Days* (1857), few nineteenth-century texts were considered by the reviewers to portray schools with any accuracy, and George Eliot found even that work to be 'unveracious' (1988: 81). Edward Monro's *Basil the Schoolboy* (1854) was deemed 'preposterous' and a 'specimen of extravagance' by *The Quarterly Review* (108:216, October 1860: 401), while *Blackwood's* considered Farrar's *Eric; or, Little by Little* (1858) to be an 'utter failure' and 'painful to read' (No. DVLIV, February 1861: 137).

Subsequently the school story has continued to be held in low esteem by commentators who have judged it to be unrealistic, formulaic and élitist, and despite its origins, its contribution to educational thought has been given little serious attention. The historian John Chandos, for instance, dismissed school fiction written for children as imitating 'supposed reality' and of inventing 'a never-never-land pastiche, compounded of garbled fragments of anecdote related at second or third hand, agreeable to the mawkish fancies of readers without the faintest knowledge or experience of the reality' (1984: 279). Yet my reading indicated that the school story grew out of authorial concern with educational issues, and has demonstrated an ability to respond to changing social and political circumstances over a period of nearly 300 years. It was this discrepancy between the writers' engagement with contemporary developments in

education and the response of critics and reviewers to their work that led me to undertake the research which forms the basis for my thesis.

In this study, my purpose is to explore the ways in which a discrete corpus of pre-twentieth-century fictional narratives set in schools represents and interprets contemporary educational concerns, drawing particularly on the critical perspectives of New Historicism to examine its relationship to extra-literary discourse. Far from reflecting ‘supposed reality’, I argue that these stories were deeply embedded in the educational culture of the time, and that their writers consciously interacted with it either to endorse the *status quo*, or to offer a critique of current practice and thinking. For example, in *Recollections of Mrs Anderson’s School* (1851), a text discussed in some detail in Chapter 3, Jane Hooper makes an explicit defense of the young ladies’ seminary which had become the focus of considerable public criticism.² Similarly, in *School Experiences of a Fag at a Private and a Public School* (1854), another book I shall consider later, George Melly describes how widespread concerns about conditions in boys’ schools³ prompted him to contrast two models of education in order to promote ‘the reform of proved abuse’ (311) in private schools, and to restore confidence in the monitorial system in the public schools. While it is not possible to measure the precise impact of such texts on current policy and practice, it is clear that some achieved a very wide circulation and would almost certainly have contributed to the contemporary awareness of educational issues already stimulated by mainstream novelists such as Charles Dickens, and by numerous extra-literary discourses including articles in newspapers and periodicals.

² See for example ‘An Inquiry into the State of Girls’ Fashionable Schools’. *Fraser’s Magazine of Town and Country* 31 (1854): 703-12.

³ See ‘A Wykehamist’. ‘Flogging and Fagging at Winchester’. *Quarterly Journal of Education* IX: XVII (1834): 84-90.

Hughes' *Tom Brown* ran into six editions within a year of first publication, for instance, while Farrar's *Eric* was reprinted more than 30 times in the author's lifetime. Even when critics questioned the literary merits of these stories, it is evident that they used review articles as a springboard for drawing attention to a range of educational issues raised in the fictional texts, and so for initiating wider debate. For example, an article entitled 'Public School Education' in the *Quarterly Review* of October 1860 begins with a critique of stories by Farrar, Monro and Melly, but quickly moves on to a discussion of the relative merits of formal schooling versus home education. There is evidence too that the reading public expected the school story to promote a specific agenda for reform. The Preface to the sixth edition of *Tom Brown* (1858) includes a letter to Hughes from F.D. Maurice criticising his failure to suggest practical measures for the eradication of the bullying depicted in the novel, and asking him to address the issue in his next work. While Hughes does not agree with Maurice's own suggestions for dealing with the problem, he does acknowledge that his whole object in writing *Tom Brown* was 'to get the chance of preaching' (xvii), and to disseminate the 'teaching and example' of Thomas Arnold. Critics now generally agree that Hughes' portrait of Arnold's Rugby is inaccurate in many respects. Nevertheless, several studies of the school story, including Jeffrey Richards' *Happiest Days* (1988), argue that *Tom Brown* did much to promote the ideals for which the reformed public schools came to stand: 'the decent, honourable, reticent embodiment of duty, loyalty and good form' (Richards 1988: 298), and so contributed to the shaping of the growing educational provision for the middle classes.

Fundamental to this approach has been the identification both of fictional texts set in schools, and of non-fictional discourses which examine contemporary schooling or discuss questions of educational principle, policy and practice. An important focus of my research has been the recovery and investigation of stories which have fallen into oblivion, and which have

so far not received any critical attention. By setting the school story within its social and historical context, my aim is to challenge the conception of the genre as fanciful and formulaic and to demonstrate the ways in which it engages with current debates and thinking to illuminate and interrogate the contemporary educational scene.

Focus and parameters of the study

For the purposes of my research, I have chosen to focus on the period 1820-1880 as a time of substantial change and progress in British education. At the beginning of the period, there was no coherent system of either elementary or secondary schooling. Provision was at best patchy, leaving the majority of children without access to formal education. As the century progressed, however, the rapid increase in the child population, coupled with the demand for a more skilled and literate workforce, stimulated the growth of educational opportunities for all sections of the population. New schools were established as a result of both state intervention and the initiatives of voluntary bodies and pioneering individuals. At the same time, existing provision was scrutinised and reformed. For instance, the Public Schools (Clarendon) Commission (PSC) was set up in 1861 to inquire into the management and use of endowments in nine schools,⁴ and incidentally to gather information about the education they provided. Three years later, the Taunton or Schools Inquiry Commission (SIC) was charged with investigating the state of all other schools providing post-elementary education, including those for girls. As well as leading to legislation rationalising the use of endowments, the reports of both Commissions contained extensive recommendations for improvements in every area of school life. Many of these were influenced by the evidence of teachers, parents and

⁴ These were Eton, Harrow, Westminster, Winchester, Rugby, Charterhouse and Shrewsbury, known as the 'great' schools, plus two major London day schools, Merchant Taylors' and St. Paul's.

pupils, as well as by the work of reforming headteachers such as Thomas Arnold, Edward Thring and Dorothea Beale.

The Commissioners' reports also generated extensive public debate on matters such as the content of the curriculum, and the campaign for women's admission to higher education. The periodical press in particular provided a platform for the theorists and professionals to publicise their views, as well as offering a forum for lively public discussion of issues as diverse as the teaching of science, the use of corporal punishment, and the shortcomings of croquet as a form of exercise for girls. At the same time, treatises on educational subjects proliferated, and the work of novelists as diverse as Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, George Eliot and William Makepeace Thackeray helped to raise the public consciousness of questions relating to the schooling of both boys and girls.

This widespread public interest in educational matters, accompanied by the growth in the number of children experiencing school for themselves, meant that the period 1820-1880 was also important for the development of school fiction. Bibliographical searches carried out by Sims and Clare for *The Encyclopaedia of Girls' School Stories* (2000) indicate that while only around fifteen books for girls were published between 1749 and 1820, more than twice as many appeared during the next sixty years, with the numbers gradually increasing from decade to decade. Kirkpatrick's parallel work on the much larger corpus of boys' books shows a similar trend. My own work, which is restricted to stories set in schools providing education beyond the elementary phase, but which has nevertheless extended the bibliographical base, confirms this pattern. So far I have identified only nine school stories for boys published in the 1820s and 1830s, and twelve for girls. By 1860, the numbers published annually began to increase significantly, with 113 boys' books and thirty-four girls' books published between 1860 and 1880. Kirkpatrick and Sims and Clare show this trend continuing into the last two

decades of the century, when 148 new titles were published for boys, and forty-two for girls.⁵ In addition to these texts, the period 1820-1880 also saw the publication of growing numbers of stories featuring village and Sunday schools. While most continued to appear as full-length books, from 1867 a more sensational form of the school story began to appear in serial form in ‘penny dreadfuls’ such as *The Young Englishman’s Journal* and its rival paper, *Boys of England*. Many of these stories were later reissued as complete volumes: Kirkpatrick (1990) records forty-seven such titles published in the latter part of the century, but acknowledges that his list is probably incomplete.

The stories with a school setting which were published in this key period proved to be both more numerous and more diverse than I had anticipated. Partly in the interests of manageability, and partly because of the difficulty of tracing and accessing these very ephemeral texts, I decided to disregard those which first appeared in serial form in the boys’ weeklies. I have also excluded those set in schools concerned only with the teaching of elementary literacy and numeracy, and have concentrated on books which feature the grammar, proprietary and private schools which, together with the ‘great’ public schools and a number of charitable foundations, aimed to provide a classical or liberal education for the middle and upper classes. Although boundaries between different stages of schooling were not formally delineated until the 1870s, the term ‘secondary’ has been used by historians such as Margaret Bryant and John Roach as a convenient anachronism to refer to these establishments, though it should be noted that while most catered for pupils in the 11-18 age-range, some

⁵ Source: R. Kirkpatrick, *The Encyclopaedia of Boys’ School Stories* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000) and S. Sims and H. Clare, *The Encyclopaedia of Girls’ School Stories* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

accepted children as young as seven,⁶ and this practice is reflected in a number of fictional texts.

Relationship to other work in the field

In spite of its long history and popular appeal, the school story has received relatively little scholarly attention. Early texts have been especially neglected, and many have fallen into oblivion. Consequently, although acknowledged to be incomplete, Jill Grey's 1968 listing of some eighty-six titles which preceded *Tom Brown's School Days* proved influential in drawing attention to this important group of stories. For example, in their chapters on 'Early School Stories' in the two-volume *Encyclopaedia of School Stories* (2000), Kirkpatrick and Sims and Clare build explicitly on Grey's work, identifying additional texts and indicating how the genre developed in the years preceding and immediately following the publication of *Tom Brown*. In particular, they show how the collections of moral tales typical of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century texts were gradually superseded by continuous narratives featuring themes and motifs which have subsequently become synonymous with the genre, such as friendship and rivalry between pupils, schoolboy/girl codes of honour, the unjust accusation, the illicit feast, and the daring rescue from fire or flood. They show too how fictional texts reflected developments in schooling for both sexes.

Since the publication of the *Encyclopaedia*, Kirkpatrick (2001 and 2006) has considerably widened the bibliographical base for the study of boys' books. However, although Sims and Clare include some useful material on books published before 1880, work on tracing early stories for girls has been much more limited. As they observe, 'it is certain that there are many sitting on

⁶ Many grammar schools, for instance, admitted pupils as soon as they could read and write competently.

the shelves of the great libraries waiting to be tracked down' (382). Hence a vital aspect of my own research has been the search for further 'lost' nineteenth-century texts in order to expand further the bibliographic foundation for the critical appraisal of this body of literature. The outcomes of my work are set out in the Appendix where I also outline some of the problems facing the bibliographer.

Despite the work of Grey and her successors, however, scholarly interest in these early examples of the genre has remained slight. Kirkpatrick states that 'no-one has systematically studied the early school-story' (2006: 1), while Sims and Clare conclude that '[m]uch work remains to be done on pre-1880 girls' school stories' (2000: 373). The period between 1820 and 1880 in particular has been little studied. Summaries of some of the features of pre-1820 texts can be found in Grey's 1968 introduction to the OUP facsimile edition of *The Governess* as well as in Samuel Pickering's *Moral Instruction and Fiction for Children* (1993), Matthew Grenby's *Children's Literature* (2008), and *The Cambridge Companion to Children's Literature* (2009) edited by Grenby and Andrea Immel. Mavis Reimer's chapter 'Traditions of the School Story' in this last work traces elements of allegory in *The Governess* and stories by Mary Wollstonecraft and Ellenor Fenn, while Grey shows how the episodic structure of Fielding's narrative provided a model for her successors well into the nineteenth century. I shall examine the influence of this text on the development of the genre in my first chapter. These general overviews also emphasise the focus of the earliest texts on education as a process of socialisation and moral formation, highlighting their adherence to the representation of conventional gender roles, and drawing attention to the resulting differences in books for boys and girls, which, as I shall demonstrate in the course of this thesis, developed along different lines. Like Kirkpatrick and Sims and Clare, Grenby also notes the early emergence of themes which have come to typify the genre, especially those of power, authority, independence and obedience which are germane to the process of

maturation.

Among standard studies of the school story, Peter Musgrave's history of the genre (1985) refers to two titles published before *Tom Brown* (1857), and briefly discusses several novels from the 1860s and 1870s before focusing on the successors of Hughes and Farrar, particularly on Talbot Baines Reed whose *The Fifth Form at St Dominic's* appeared in 1887. Other generic studies, such as those by John Reed (1964), Isabel Quigley (1982) and Jeffrey Richards (1988) concentrate even more narrowly on the mid-1870s onwards, discussing only *Tom Brown* and Farrar's *Eric; or, Little by Little* (1858) from before that date. Further, Reed and Richards prioritise books designed for an adult audience. More recently, though, Claudia Nelson (1991), Beverly Lyon Clark (1996), Elizabeth Gargano (2005) and Jenny Holt (2008) have all included the work of nineteenth-century writers other than Hughes and Farrar in their studies of stories set in boys' schools, and have thus made a significant contribution to the recovery and elucidation of a number of previously forgotten texts.

Much work on stories for girls also neglects early texts. Reed, Richards and Musgrave ignore girls' books entirely. Quigley's single chapter on 'Girls' School Stories' cites Brazil's *The Fortunes of Philippa* (1906) as the first school story for girls, although Grey's 1968 bibliography had identified more than 20 already published by 1857. More recently, Judy Simons (2008) also credits Brazil with the making of the girls' school story, tracing her influence on later writers, but failing to examine the roots of her work in the nineteenth century. Other recent work on girls' books, including studies by Rosemary Auchmuty (1992 and 1999), Sheena Wilkinson (2007) and Judith Humphrey (2009), also prioritises twentieth-century fiction, while Kimberley Reynolds (1990) and Reimer (2005) concentrate on texts from the period 1880-1910, particularly on the work of L.T. Meade, whose first school story, *A World of Girls*, appeared in 1886. By focusing my own analysis on the neglected years between 1820 and 1880, I aim significantly to extend

appreciation of this rich and varied corpus of texts, as well as to further understanding of the genre as a whole by examining its relationship to contemporary educational thinking and practice.

A further limitation of the study of the early school story to date is its emphasis on the establishment of themes and motifs which have since come to be seen as the defining characteristics of the genre. As I have already indicated, Kirkpatrick (2006) and others identify many examples of recurring plot devices in stories published from the late eighteenth century onwards. Their tendency is then to trace the subsequent development of the school story in terms of the treatment of such themes rather than through the consideration of texts in relation to the society that produced them. Musgrave similarly evaluates a number of mid-Victorian stories in the light of later developments in the genre. The work of Nelson, Clark, Gargano and Holt referred to above is important not only for its recognition of stories published before 1880, but also for its rejection of a narrowly generic approach in order to place popular texts within their social and political context. Thus Nelson and Clark highlight the contribution of fiction to current discussion of questions about the socialisation of boys. Studies of later stories for girls by Reynolds, Reimer and Humphrey also demonstrate the capacity of fiction both to perpetuate and to subvert prevailing gender expectations. There is considerable scope for building on this work by placing the nineteenth-century school story within its broader historical context, particularly in order to elucidate and evaluate its response to significant educational issues of the time.

There is substantial published research on nineteenth-century developments in education, and on the investigative work and the thinking that informed them, although most dates from the last decades of the twentieth century. Much of this work focuses on the role of the state, particularly in the provision of elementary education. Studies of private schooling, such as those by Thomas Bamford (1967), Brian Simon and Ian Bradley (1975), John Honey (1977) and John Chandos (1984) have been mainly concerned with the élite public schools for boys. Apart from Margaret

Bryant's important historical survey of secondary schooling in London (1986) and the recent research of Christina De Bellaigue (2004 and 2007) on the education of girls, there has been minimal examination of the place of the many private academies in the overall provision for the middle classes. The endowed grammar schools have also been little studied. However, there is a considerable body of research on the development of higher education for women, and the work of Joyce Sanders Pedersen (1987) and others has demonstrated its impact on the development of academic schools for girls.

While much of this work draws extensively on contemporary documentation, such as the reports of the Clarendon and Taunton Commissions (1864 and 1868-70), few historical studies since E.C. Mack's two-volume *Public Schools and British Opinion* (1938 and 1941) make references to the representations of schools in contemporary fiction, and the school story itself has rarely been used as a documentary historical source. Besides examining the impact of educational practice and theory upon fiction, it is important to consider whether stories themselves can be seen as contributing to contemporary developments in schooling. For this reason, my own survey of the nineteenth-century school story has concentrated on the historical rather than on the literary significance of individual texts. However, it must be recognised, as Holt has pointed out, that the stories 'grew out of an incredibly complex mixture of motivations' (2008: 23). They convey advice to children and parents as well as to teachers, they express nostalgia as well as political opinion, and examine subjective experience as well as the principles and practice of education. It is therefore important to ensure that a focus on historical connections does not encourage an interpretation of texts which obscures their literary representation of emotional and psychological responses to school life. In fact, as I shall demonstrate, literary techniques such as the use of irony, metaphor and narrative perspective, are consistently used to convey the author's attitudes towards contemporary educational practice.

Theoretical perspective and methodology

As I have already indicated, the reading of fiction alongside non-literary discourses which address the same concerns is fundamental to the positioning of the school story in its social and educational context. The New Historicist focus on the inter-relationship between fiction and extra-literary material is particularly relevant to the investigation of the ways in which school fiction was shaped by contemporary thinking and events, and contributed to both the transmission and the questioning of current educational ideology. I have therefore chosen to adopt this approach in examining the relationship between nineteenth-century school fiction and the historical and educational conditions which generated it.

Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault (1970) and Clifford Geertz (1973), Stephen Greenblatt (1980) coined the term ‘New Historicism’ to refer to a critical method which assumes what he called ‘the mutual embeddedness of art and history’ (7). It proposes a dynamic relationship between literature and other discourses, and places particular emphasis on the parallel reading of fictional and non-fictional works of the same historical period. Initially developed by Greenblatt and others as a tool for the interpretation of Renaissance drama, this approach was first applied to children’s literature by Mitzi Myers (1988) in her re-appraisal of eighteenth-century writers, notably Maria Edgeworth. Myers set out to demonstrate how these writers used stories for children to comment on the social and intellectual assumptions of the time, ‘to answer its questions about childhood’ and to provide ‘a cultural critique of contemporary educational practice and gender definition’ (1989: 52). For example, she showed clearly how the pedagogical principles underpinning *Practical Education* (1798), the treatise Edgeworth wrote collaboratively with her father, relate directly to the themes of her fiction. Through her adoption of this ‘contextualised approach’, Myers

pioneered a new appreciation of texts which, divorced from their social and cultural context, had come to be dismissed as tedious ‘moral tales’.

As I have already noted, many studies of the school story take what Myers (1988) termed a ‘teleological’ perspective, evaluating texts in the light of later developments in the genre, rather than in relation to the social and cultural conditions which produced them. However, as I have indicated above, where critics have begun to take a New Historicist approach to school fiction, they have revealed its capacity for serious educational comment. Clark’s (1996) consideration of the representation of masculinity in a limited number of school stories alongside contemporary gender ideology shows how the former frequently subverts the latter. Reimer (2005) examines L.T. Meade’s non-fictional accounts of girls’ schools in parallel with her fictional portrayals, highlighting her use of the writing of reformers such as Dorothea Beale and Emily Davies to provide a serious appraisal of educational provision for girls at the end of the nineteenth century. Gargano (2007) investigates the depiction of the schoolroom and the school site in Victorian fiction, including several books written for children, and demonstrates clearly how fiction engages with educational debate. Reading the school story alongside extra-literary material has enabled these critics to point to a rich interplay between children’s literature and contemporary educational discourses. My aim is to apply similar methods to a wider range of writers and texts in order to show how neglected works, excluded from generic studies because they resist analysis in terms of later developments, can provide many insights into the society which produced them.

Advice from specialists in a number of libraries and archives has helped me to locate relevant historical sources and to identify key extra-literary material which has provided the ‘co-texts’ crucial to a New Historicist reading of fiction. The exploration of educational ephemera in the Bodleian’s John Johnson Collection and the archives of the University of

Nottingham has proved particularly productive in the search for primary sources. I have also been directed to invaluable resources online, including the British Library's collection of nineteenth-century newspapers and the House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, which contain the evidence submitted to the Clarendon and Taunton Commissions and the ensuing reports. Further work in libraries and searches of Exe Libris, the online bibliography of the History of Education Society, have led to the discovery of additional secondary material, and thus to references to a wide variety of contemporary non-literary writing in theoretical treatises, letters, memoirs, sermons and journal articles, as well as in histories of individual schools.

The scrutiny of these extra-literary texts alongside fictional works has been the principal means by which I have undertaken to examine and evaluate the ways in which story engages with contemporary educational practice and thinking to offer an invaluable insight into nineteenth-century schooling.

Organisation of the study

The study is organised around five themes which were central to nineteenth-century educational debate, and which I have chosen for discussion because they are addressed recurrently in both fictional and extra-literary texts. The selected themes relate to the contribution of domestic education to the moral and spiritual formation of the individual child, the characteristics of the school as a community and socialisation within it, health, sickness and physical education, the content of the curriculum, and preparation for adult roles. In the first chapter I establish the literary, educational and social context for the research. Beginning with a consideration of Fielding's *The Governess; or, Little Female Academy* as a paradigm for the school story, I go on to show how nineteenth-century writers adopted and adapted this

model both to teach and entertain child readers, and to interpret and interrogate the changing educational scene. After outlining the principal contexts of schooling for both boys and girls, I conclude the chapter by defining the ideals of gender which determined educational practice, and which underpin my entire thesis.

I follow this with five chapters, each showing how fiction and non-fiction address one of the aspects of contemporary theory and practice identified above. Chapter Two centres on the debate concerning the merits of domestic education as opposed to formal schooling. I draw chiefly on fictional and theoretical texts by Elizabeth Sewell and Harriet Martineau to examine representations of home and school as both complementary and conflicting sites for spiritual and moral education. Chapter Three considers the organisation of education in more detail. It examines contrasting models of formal schooling delineated in a range of fictional and non-fictional texts, and explores ways in which stories both endorse and challenge ideals of the girls' school as a surrogate family, and the boy's school as a 'little world' reflecting the gendered roles, relationships and responsibilities characteristic of wider society. In exploring the concept of the school as community and its contribution to the socialisation of the individual, this chapter also highlights the negative influences of institutional schooling as expressed in abusive power structures. In Chapter Four I discuss conflicting attitudes towards the body, contrasting the growing emphasis on physical education and the growth of the cult of games with the idealisation of the invalid and the widespread neglect of provision for health.

Chapter Five centres on the debate about the content and delivery of the different curricula offered to boys and to girls, and on opinion relating to the impact of formal teaching and learning on the definition and reinforcement of gender roles. It gives particular consideration to Farrar's critique of the classical curriculum in both fictional and non-fictional texts, and to

the growing debate about the content of girls' education in an era when young women were increasingly expected to support themselves financially. Chapter Six extends this discussion by examining more closely the representation of the school as a place of social, mental, moral and spiritual preparation for adult life. It identifies different expressions of the Victorian ideology of work in both fiction and non-fiction, and explores ways in which selected stories portray the transition of young people from school to university, vocational training, and employment or, in the case of many girls, to the responsibilities of marriage and family life.

Ideals of femininity and masculinity are central to the representation and discussion of schooling throughout the period under consideration, and, as indicated above, I shall give closer consideration to the relationship between gender and education in Chapter 1.

Consequently, I have organised each chapter to allow for the separate discussion of fictional texts for boys and those for girls in order to reflect the very different educational experiences and opportunities available to the two sexes, as well as to demonstrate the capacity of fiction to interrogate conventional gender boundaries.

As my research questions indicate, my chief interest in considering each of these aspects of schooling has been to investigate and clarify the relationship between fiction and its historical context. My title is inspired by Christine Chaundler's *The Story-Book School* (1931), a text which juxtaposes the protagonist's actual experience of boarding school life with the apparently fanciful ideas she has imbibed from reading. Ultimately she finds that fiction proves closer to the truth than expected, leading the writer to conclude, 'The things that happen in story-book schools are sometimes founded on fact, it seemed' (95). I intend to show that the same may be said of the corpus of much earlier texts which form the focus of this study.

Chapter 1

The emerging school story and its context

There lived in the Northern Parts of England, a Gentlewoman who undertook the Education of young Ladies; and this Trust she endeavour'd faithfully to discharge, by instructing those committed to her Care in Reading, Writing, Working, and in all proper Forms of Behaviour... (Fielding 1749: 1)

So begins Sarah Fielding's *The Governess; or, Little Female Academy*. As indicated in the Introduction, the publication of this text is often considered to mark the birth of the school story. While the principal focus of my research is the period between 1820 and 1880, my aim in this chapter is to define more closely the educational and social context within which the school story evolved. Because the genre was already established by 1820, I want to begin by looking briefly at its eighteenth-century roots in order to show how its principal characteristics were shaped in the earliest narratives which provided a foundation for what was to come. I shall go on to consider some of the ways in which a range of nineteenth-century texts develop the conventions of the genre to represent the variety of schooling available to upper- and middle-class families in the period under consideration, using them as a means of engaging with major areas of contemporary educational debate.

Sarah Fielding's *The Governess; or, Little Female Academy* (1749) and the birth of the school story

The Governess proved highly popular when it first appeared, and was reprinted within months. Before the end of the century, it had been reissued at least four times in England, and published in Ireland, the United States, Sweden and Germany.⁷ One reason for its success was undoubtedly its originality. In her introduction to the facsimile reprint of the text, Jill Grey

⁷ For a complete publishing history of the book, see *The Governess* ed. Jill Grey (OUP, 1968): 353-360.

(1968) argues that it is the first full-length work of fiction aimed specifically at young readers. More pertinently for this study, she goes on to identify Fielding as the ‘creator of the school story’ (Grey 1968: 43).

The Governess is indeed now generally recognised as the earliest true children’s novel in English. However, there is less support for Grey’s claim that the book represents the inception of the school story genre. For example, Kirkpatrick describes it as ‘only marginally a school story’ (Kirkpatrick 2000: 362), while Sims and Clare argue that it is barely recognisable as such (Sims and Clare 2000: 373). This is because its setting is a small, family-style school run by a Mrs Teachum for nine girls aged between eight and fourteen. The location provides a frame for the telling of stories and personal histories designed both to amuse and to convey moral teaching in a palatable manner. These embedded tales constitute rather more than half of the text, so that the frame seems slight in comparison. On first reading, the situation, structure and much of the content of *The Governess* do appear quite dissimilar from the public school stories typical of the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, the book has a number of key features which establish it firmly as a seminal text, setting parameters for the genre in several important respects.

First, the school setting is central to the composition of the work, giving continuity and coherence to the different narrative strands. Secondly, it is integral to Fielding’s declared purpose ‘to cultivate an early inclination to Benevolence, and a love of Virtue, in the minds of young Women’ (iii).⁸ The authentic location, almost certainly based on her own experience of

⁸ Page numbers refer to the 1968 facsimile edition of *The Governess*. Those in italics refer to the text of the novel itself. Those in standard type relate to Grey’s introduction and appendices.

Mrs Rookes' boarding school in Salisbury,⁹ does much more than provide a consistent background to events. It also serves to validate the book's moral teaching and to commend it to its readers, simultaneously promoting and exemplifying story as an educational tool. In effect, the narrative itself functions as a school for young readers. At the same time, Fielding uses her book to address adults as well as children. Its structure provides opportunities for the overt discussion of educational ideas and methods, as when Mrs Teachum and Jenny Peace, the eldest pupil, debate the validity of stories as vehicles for teaching. On an ideological level, the book is about the principles and purpose of education itself.

Even more significant than the articulation and overt discussion of educational principles is Fielding's depiction of educational theory in practice. Mrs Teachum's methods draw extensively on the ideas propounded by John Locke in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693).¹⁰ These were rooted in the belief that 'virtue [...] direct virtue [...] is the hard and valuable part to be aimed at in education' (§70), and that children could attain a moral character through the exercise of reason and self-discipline. At the same time, education was to be made 'a recreation and not a business' (§129), always taking account of the child's 'age and temper' (§63), and encouraging learning through everyday experience rather than through filling the head with facts constituting merely 'the just furniture of a pedant' (§175). At the same time, it should aim to cultivate 'a sound mind in a sound body' (§1) through balancing

⁹ For an account of Fielding's own education, see Linda Bree, *Sarah Fielding* (1996): 3-4, and Jill Grey, 'Introduction', *The Governess* (1968): 7.

¹⁰ Quotations from Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* [1693] are taken from the text edited by J.W. and J.S Yolton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

mental and physical exercise. Children were to be considered ‘as rational creatures’ (§54) and treated with ‘kindness and respect’ (§118). Locke emphasised that to be effective, teaching must be underpinned by relationships rooted in mutual ‘love and esteem’ (§67).

Drawing on the tradition of Locke, Fielding characterises Mrs Teachum as someone who both respects and delights in pleasing her pupils, giving them the freedom to learn from each other and from everyday experience, while still allowing them to be children, and to enjoy play and physical exercise. Her encouragement of their meetings to tell and listen to stories indicates that, like Locke, she understands ‘the business of education’ as being ‘to open...minds’ by allowing ‘a variety and freedom of thinking, as an increase of the powers and activity of the mind’.¹¹ The effectiveness of her methods is demonstrated in the progress individual pupils are shown to make, and in the transformation of the school community from one where pupils ‘fought, scratch’d, and tore, like so many cats’ (7) to ‘an Example of Peace and Harmony’ (245).

Fielding’s model of schooling is essentially a domestic one, mirroring contemporary practice.¹² Mrs Teachum’s school is run in her own home and is small enough for her to teach and supervise all the girls herself (3). Her role is defined in maternal terms (242), and in its replication of a private household the school frequently provides a metaphor for the family. Fielding suggests too that her little community is a reflection of the wider world of which it is an integral part, describing Jenny Peace as ‘the Cement of Union and Harmony in this well-regulated society’ (244).

¹¹ John Locke, *Of the Conduct of Understanding* (1706): §19.

¹² For a detailed definition of the English domestic model of schooling, see Christina De Bellaigue, ‘Behind the School Walls: The School Community in French and English Boarding Schools for Girls, 1810-1867’. *Paedagogica Historica* 40.1 (2004): 107-121.

The metaphorical use of the school enables Fielding to make a particular contribution to the long-running educational debate about the appropriateness of school education for girls. She shows how Locke's ideas, originally formulated as guidance for the home tuition of boys, might be implemented in an institutional setting, albeit a fairly informal one. The analogy also allows her to move beyond the consideration of the aims and methods of education and to explore wider issues about the relationship between family, school and society, and their capacity to influence one another for good or ill.

The Governess thus provides a model for a genre which uses a school setting both as a medium for the entertainment and teaching of young readers, and as a catalyst for the engagement of adults in the consideration of educational theory and practice. In using the school to symbolise both the family and wider society, the book also demonstrates the capacity of the genre to provide a vehicle for the examination of other social institutions and the relationships between them. Fielding's successors built upon this model, drawing on the experience of contemporary schooling to inform the critique of educational ideas and practices in their social context as well as to authenticate a moral message.

In subsequent chapters, I shall examine in detail some of the ways in which nineteenth-century school fiction treats specific issues raised in the educational debates of the day. Here, I aim first to show how it uses and develops the genre in response to contemporary provision for schooling.

Schools at the centre – the little academies

In choosing to place the school at the centre of a narrative, the writers of the stories which are the focus of this study reflect the considerable diversity of provision for those children and young people who continued their education beyond the elementary phase. Fiction depicts

establishments ranging in size from half a dozen to several hundred pupils, and from the ‘ill-conditioned’ to both the homelike and the aristocratic. The schools include ancient grammar and ‘public’ schools, as well as new foundations such as the proprietary and denominational schools. Private and home tuition, which often supplemented formal schooling, is also featured in a number of stories. However, it is the private academy, run on similar lines to that featured in *The Governess* and its immediate successors, which provides the setting for almost all school stories published for girls between 1820 and 1880, and for a high proportion of those for boys. As research by Susan Skedd (1997)¹³ and Nicholas Hans (1951)¹⁴ shows, such schools had proliferated during the second half of the eighteenth century. Those for boys provided an alternative to the larger endowed grammar and ‘great’ public schools, and frequently flourished in areas where there were few older foundations, or where those schools were in decline. Some provided an education specifically for non-conformists and others excluded from the public schools on religious grounds.¹⁵

The early and middle years of the nineteenth century saw further growth in the number of such establishments. Christina De Bellaigue’s study of the development of girls’ schooling between 1800 and 1867 shows that they flourished not only in the capital, fashionable resorts

¹³ Skedd’s research shows that the number of private schools for girls in Oxfordshire more than doubled between 1760 and 1820. By 1820, there were at least 43 schools of this type located in towns and villages across the county, and a further 19 in the city of Oxford itself. See S. Skedd, ‘Women Teachers and the Expansion of Girls’ Schooling’ in *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities*, ed. H. Barker and E. Chalus (1997): 101-125.

¹⁴ For an overview of this development, see Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England* (1973). Hans, *New Trends in Education in the Eighteenth Century* (1951) provides a more detailed account of the growth of private schools for boys during the eighteenth century. He identifies numerous academies offering both a specialised and a general education as well as ‘many hundreds’ (119) of private classical schools, most of which were run by clergy to supplement their limited stipends.

¹⁵ For an account of some of these schools see Margaret E. Bryant, ‘Private Education from the Sixteenth Century’ in *A History of the County of Middlesex* Vol. 1, ed. J.S. Cockburn, et al. (1969): 248-251.

and market towns, but also in the fast-growing industrial cities. Drawing on evidence from commercial and scholastic directories, and from the researches of the Schools Inquiry Commission (SIC) of 1865-7, she estimates that by the 1860s, about half of all middle-class girls were being educated in small private schools (De Bellaigue, 2007: 14). Margaret Bryant and John Roach describe a similar expansion in provision for boys, and highlight the very significant contribution made by the private academies to the education of the Victorian middle class (Bryant, 1986: 128; Roach, 1986: 4).

The merits of the domestic model of education were emphasised in the advertisements for such schools. Those for both boys and girls boasted of taking ‘a very limited number’¹⁶ of pupils, and of treating them ‘with every parental kindness’,¹⁷ combining ‘the regularity of a school with the comfort and indulgence of a genteel Private Family’.¹⁸ These ideals are reflected and promoted in fiction throughout the period under consideration. Schools for both sexes are frequently depicted as substitute homes where the domestic arrangements are similar to those found in a private household and where relationships are understood in familial terms. Thus the anonymous author of *My School-Boy Days* (1844) recalls that his headmaster ‘Mr White was, in every sense of the word, a second parent’ (8) and remarks, ‘as I looked at him, I thought that I should love him’ (9). In *Sketches from a Youthful Circle* (1834) Ann Gilbert highlights the comfort of ‘the large, warm school-room’ (24), and throughout the book, she likens relationships between pupils and staff, and between younger and older girls, to those of mother and daughter. ‘Oh, ma’am, I do love you so much, for you are almost like my mamma’

¹⁶ Advertisement for the Revd. G.T. Terry’s school for young gentlemen at Bedale, *The York Herald and General Advertiser*, 4 July 1835.

¹⁷ Advertisement for a boarding school run by Mr Rogerson of Doncaster, *ibid.*

¹⁸ Advertisement for Miss Nurshaw’s school for young ladies at Beech Hill House, Knaresborough, *ibid.*

(56) a new pupil exclaims when she kisses her headmistress goodnight. Miss Wilmot, the most senior girl, is also addressed as ‘Mamma’ by the much younger Ellen, and calls her ‘my child’ in return (153). These and similar texts focus principally on the ways in which such relationships foster attitudes and values necessary to harmonious family life.

The domestic alternative to school

In spite of the rapid expansion of ‘public’ education for both sexes during the second half of the eighteenth century, home tuition remained an accepted alternative for the upper and middle classes.¹⁹ It is appropriate to refer to it briefly here because its merits and limitations are frequently considered alongside those of institutional schooling in both fictional and extra-literary texts.

Frank Musgrove (1970) argues that what he terms ‘the domestic experiment’ (118), at least in the education of boys, had begun to decline by 1830, and had virtually died out by 1880,²⁰ mainly because increased social mobility from the 1830s onwards meant that middle class parents in particular began to look to public schooling to confer status on their sons, as well as to equip them for changing patterns of employment. However, there is substantial evidence to show that private tutors continued to play a role in the education of many boys throughout most of the nineteenth century. Scholastic directories include numerous advertisements for those offering to compensate for the shortcomings of the schools by preparing pupils for entry

¹⁹ In his analysis of the education received by 3,500 men born between 1685 and 1785 and listed in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Hans found that 28.5% had been taught entirely at home or by private tutors (Hans, 1951: 23). He notes that the sample included sons of the professional classes as well as the aristocracy and landed gentry.

²⁰ For a detailed analysis of this transition, see Frank Musgrove, ‘Middle-class Families and Schools, 1780-1880. Interaction and Exchange of Functions between Institutions’ in *Sociology, History and Education: A Reader*, ed. P.W. Musgrave, (1970): 117-125.

to the universities or one of the professions.²¹ Home tuition was often the natural choice for boys who were delicate or otherwise unfit to deal with the rigours of public school life, as illustrated in J.C. Atkinson's *Stanton Grange; or, At a Private Tutor's* (1864). Most significantly, perhaps, it was widely regarded as the most appropriate form of education for younger boys even though its efficacy was questionable. In 1862, for example, the Head Master of Westminster complained that a third of new entrants to the school were 'sadly ignorant', alleging, 'The worst boys generally come from home, where they have been utterly neglected and allowed to grow up learning nothing' (PSC 1864, vol. I: 432). This problem is highlighted in a number of fictional texts which I shall discuss later, including Harriet Martineau's *The Crofton Boys* (1841) and Frederic Farrar's *St Winifred's* (1862).

Throughout the nineteenth century, girls were more likely than boys to be taught at home. The employment of governesses for girls actually grew in the middle years of the century.²² Jeanne Peterson suggests that this practice had become a status symbol among middle-class families, testifying both to the economic power of the husband, and to the 'ornamental functions' of their wives.²³ Whatever the reason, in 1868 the Schools Inquiry Commissioners stated, 'The wealthiest class, as a rule, do not send their daughters to school' (SIC 1868-70, vol. I: 558). However, they also found that, as for boys, home and school supplemented one

²¹ For example, the Revd. Frederick Smythe of Cheltenham advertised in Crockford's *Scholastic Directory* of 1861 his availability to prepare 'Four Private Pupils' for 'Army, Navy, University, Civil Service and the Public Schools' (v).

²² The census of 1851 recorded nearly 21,000 governesses employed in private homes. In 1861, the figure had risen to nearly 25,000. Quoted in P. Horn, 'The Victorian Governess'. *History of Education* 18.4 (1989): 333.

²³ See M. Jeanne Peterson, 'The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society'. *Victorian Studies* XIV. I (1990): 7-26.

another in the education of many girls, although in a much more fragmented way.²⁴ As I shall demonstrate in Chapter 2, stories for girls, such as Elizabeth Sewell's *Laneton Parsonage* (1846-9) and Anna Buckland's *Lily and Nannie at School* (1868), more often uphold home teaching as the ideal, and frequently focus on contrasts and conflicts between home and school. However, the 'excellent education' received by Clara Howard in Mary Hughes' *The Rebellious School-Girl* (1821) is explicitly attributed to the combination of both elements. She is taught by her mother until she can be 'trusted to a boarding school' at the age of twelve (Hughes 1821: 98-9). It is perhaps significant, though, that the principal of the school is a family friend who receives Clara with 'a truly maternal embrace' (46).

The grammar schools and the 'great' schools

For boys, a further alternative to home tuition or attendance at one of the many private academies was provided by the endowed public grammar schools and the élite boarding establishments which evolved from some of them. Many of these schools had been founded in the sixteenth century to offer a free classical education to local boys in villages, towns and cities across the country. By the eighteenth century, their dominance of middle-class education had begun to recede, and by the middle of the nineteenth century they were educating only a minority of pupils.²⁵ A number of reasons have been suggested for this decline,²⁶ but major

²⁴ An analysis of the schooling received by a sample of 24 senior pupils at one London school showed that all but two had previously been taught partially at home. More than half had attended two or three other schools in addition, with intervening periods 'at home' (SIC 1868-70, vol. VII: 606-7).

²⁵ In his survey of West Riding schools for the SIC, J.G. Fitch estimated that less than 25% of middle-class boys were being educated in the endowed grammar schools (SIC vol. IX: 225).

²⁶ For a detailed analysis of the problems facing the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century grammar school, see R.S. Thompson, *Classics or Charity: the Dilemma of the Eighteenth-century Grammar School*, (1971). The Schools Inquiry Commissioners, reporting on the situation of the endowed day school in the 1860s, stated: 'Very

factors are likely to have been the inability of the smaller schools to recruit sufficient numbers locally, the fall in the value of endowments, and growing public dissatisfaction with an education consisting almost entirely of Greek and Latin. By 1865 many were judged by the Schools Inquiry Commissioners to be ‘in a languid condition’ (SIC vol. I: 102).

Not surprisingly, from the eighteenth century onwards, some grammar schools began to instigate changes designed to halt decline and counter competition from the burgeoning private academies. The admission of significant numbers of fee-paying boarders was a strategy adopted by a number of schools. One example was the Free School of Laurence Sheriff, founded by a London grocer to educate ‘boys of any town, village, or hamlet within five measured miles of Rugby’ (PSC vol. I: 234), but which by the 1830s was already attracting pupils from much further afield. By 1861, almost 400 of the school’s 463 pupils were boarders, prompting the Clarendon Commissioners to comment that ‘the boys of the nation [...] have grown into the bulk and body of the school’ (269), and to recommend the phasing out of local qualifications for the free admission of foundationers. Thus with Harrow, Shrewsbury and Charterhouse, Rugby gradually became the preserve of the upper classes and the aristocracy. These four schools, together with Eton, Winchester and Westminster, whose statutes had always provided for the admission of fee-payers as well as free scholars, were perceived as a group, characterised not only by combining a boarding education with teaching the classics, but also by religious conformity and support of the establishment.²⁷ Often referred to as the ‘great schools’, they more generally became known somewhat ambiguously as

many are...unwilling to relinquish the classics, unable to give them full play, struggling feebly to accommodate themselves to the discordant aims of the several parts of the community’ (SIC vol. I: 102).

²⁷ For a summary of the evolution of these schools, see Thomas Bamford’s introduction to *The Rise of the Public School* (1967).

‘public schools’, a term clarified in the report of the Public Schools Commission (PSC) of 1864²⁸ and given legal status in the Public Schools Act of the same year. Other grammar schools, such as those at Uppingham, Repton and Sherborne, developed in a similar way. At Repton, for example, the Schools Inquiry Commissioners found that the roll rose from forty-eight to 205 between 1854 and 1864 as the result of an initiative to admit ‘gentleman boarders’ (SIC vol. XVI: 508). By the second half of the nineteenth century such establishments had also begun to define themselves as public schools. The Headmasters’ Conference, set up in 1869 by the headmaster of Uppingham to promote their interests, quickly drew in the ‘great’ schools, effectively endorsing the separation of this group from the remaining free grammar schools.

Predictably, the established ‘great’ schools provide the setting for a number of stories published between 1820 and 1880. As well as Hughes’ *Tom Brown*, still known for its portrayal of Arnold’s Rugby, these include Bracebridge Hemyng’s *Eton School Days* (1864) and *Butler Burke at Eton* (1865) and William Lennox’s *Percy Hamilton* (1851), an account of Westminster in the early years of the century. Henry Adams’ Westonbury is recognisably based on Winchester, while Rugby is thinly disguised as Harby in George Melly’s *School Experiences of a Fag* (1854). Alongside such texts, fiction also affords a medium for the exploration of the changing role of the endowed grammar school and the emergence of new ‘public’ schools. Early in the period, it provides the context for the depiction of conflict between free scholars and fee-paying boarders in Susannah Strickland’s *Hugh Latimer* (1828). Selina Burbury’s *The Grammar School Boys* (1854) and Emily Bickersteth’s *School and Home* (1864) focus principally on the experiences of day boys in flourishing grammar schools

²⁸ See PSC 1864, vol. I: 9-11. Colin Shrosbree, in *Public Schools and Private Education*, (1988), provides a useful account of the evolution of the concept of the public school.

and on the contribution such establishments make to local life. At the same time, they acknowledge the advantages that boarders and wealthy parents may bring to these schools, a point which is illustrated in Ascott R. Hope's *George's Enemies* (1872), where the creation of an additional boarding house at the fictional Whitminster Grammar School is central to the new headmaster's strategy for arresting decline. Nevertheless, 'town boys' continue to feature prominently in Hope's work. However, by the end of the period under consideration, most grammar schools featured in these stories have ceased to admit day pupils. In *Alwyn Morton: A Tale of St Nicholas' Grammar School* (1867), for example, Elizabeth Phelps deliberately stresses the benefits a boarding education confers on those attending a school originally founded to educate local boys.

New foundations

From the late eighteenth century onwards, several new types of secondary school began to be established, primarily to meet the educational needs of particular sections of the population and catering for both day and boarding pupils. The most significant group consisted of the so-called 'Proprietary Schools',²⁹ most of which were founded to provide the middle classes with a cheaper and more broadly based alternative to the public and endowed schools. Reporting on the opening of Surrey County School, Cranley, in 1865, one commentator observed, 'What is required for such lads is a school in which the expenses shall be moderate, the teaching not preoccupied chiefly with Latin and Greek, and the system and spirit as much as possible like

²⁹ This term was applied by the Schools Inquiry Commission to schools which were initially 'the property of a body of shareholders' rather than being in individual ownership, like the private academies, or supported by endowments, like the grammar and public schools.

those of the old public schools'.³⁰ Some set out explicitly to cater for specific professional groups. Marlborough (1843) and Radley (1847), for example, gave priority to the sons of clergymen. Almost all aimed to equip their pupils for a future career. At a time when schools such as Eton and Westminster still taught little apart from Latin and Greek, Radley had a 'special department for boys intended for army, navy, and civil service', and advertised 'special instruction in [...] geometrical drawing, land surveying, and experimental science'.³¹ This commitment to preparation for the world of work, coupled with their appeal to a defined clientèle, ensured that many of the new schools were successful,³² and by 1869 they too were defining themselves as 'public schools' through membership of the Headmasters' Conference.

Denominational foundations constituted another significant category of provision.³³ These included both proprietary schools, and those established by religious orders and charitable trusts. New Anglican schools were instituted with the deliberate aim of providing pupils with sound religious teaching. Among notable examples were the eleven set up by Nathaniel Woodard from 1848 onwards, and which included Lancing and Hurstpierpoint.³⁴ The Society of Friends and the Wesleyans opened new secondary schools for both boys and girls. Several Roman Catholic schools which had operated in exile during penal times were revived when the religious orders sought refuge in England at the time of the French Revolution. These

³⁰ *Illustrated London News*, October 21, 1865.

³¹ *Prospectus* as quoted in SIC vol. XI: 487.

³² For example, following his inspection in 1865, Mr H.A. Gifford reported that Epsom College was 'One of the best schools for the price which I have met with in my district' (SIC vol. VII: 152).

³³ The contribution of different religious denominations to the establishment of new schools is summarised usefully in John Roach, *A History of Secondary Education in England, 1800-1870* (1986): 174-183.

³⁴ For a history of these schools see Brian Heeney, *Mission to the Middle Classes: the Woodard Schools 1848-1891* (1969).

included Stonyhurst (1794),³⁵ Downside (1795) and Ampleforth (1802). Among new foundations was a growing number of girls' schools established by teaching orders originating in continental Europe, or expressly set up for educational work.³⁶

The campaign for the higher education of women, and the establishment of university colleges, led to the setting up of secular high schools and academic boarding schools for girls from the 1850s onwards. The pioneering work of their founders, and the gradual development of an entirely new approach to girls' schooling, has been well documented.³⁷ Among the first of the new schools were The North London Collegiate School for Ladies (1850) and The Ladies' College Cheltenham (1854). The Schools Inquiry Commissioners, who had been so critical of many of the private schools for girls, were greatly impressed with these new ventures. They praised Cheltenham as 'a really efficient school' (SIC XV: 830), and elsewhere discovered examples of 'high excellence' in the Liverpool Institute Girls' School, commending it as 'a model for imitation in other cities' (SIC IX: 596).

Until the turn of the century, however, the opportunity to take advantage of these developments in female education was available to very few girls. Not surprisingly, their significance is barely recognised in school stories published before 1880.³⁸ The anonymous

³⁵ For a detailed account of the history of Stonyhurst College see Maurice Whitehead, '“Superior to the Rudest Shocks of Adversity”: English Jesuit Education and Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1688-1832', in *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain*, ed. Mary Hilton and Jill Shefrin (2009): 131-146.

³⁶ For an account of the work of one such order, see M. O'Leary, *Education with a Tradition: An Account of the Educational Work of the Society of the Sacred Heart* (1936).

³⁷ See for example Margaret Bryant, *The Unexpected Revolution* (1979), and Joyce Sanders Pedersen, *The Reform of Girls' Secondary and Higher Education in Victorian England* (1987).

³⁸ The first story featuring an English academic high school appears to be Mrs Henry Clarke's *The Ravensworth Scholarship* (1894). Most boarding school stories by writers such as L.T. Meade and Angela Brazil continued to be set in small private establishments until the second decade of the twentieth century, although her correspondence with Dorothea Beale suggests that Meade may have based *Girls New and Old* (1896) on

Harrie; or, Schoolgirl Life in Edinburgh (1877) appears unique in its positive portrayal of life at the Scottish Dunedin Institution where ‘professors’ teach an academic curriculum to 150 girls. While the names of some fictional schools suggest similar practice, establishments such as Matilda Betham-Edwards’ Marigold House Collegiate School for Girls remain little academies in all but designation. Thus in *Ally and Her School-Fellow* (1861), Edwards depicts the thirty pupils gathered round the schoolroom fire much as Ann Gilbert had done nearly thirty years earlier. In contrast, the new schools for boys are represented in a number of texts. Stephen MacKenna’s *King’s Beeches* (1873) is explicitly set in ‘a proprietary college of character and position for the cadets of good or wealthy families’ (14). Although not overtly referred to as a proprietary school, the institution featured in the anonymous *How It Was Done at Stow School* (1862)³⁹ is run by a board of directors and described as a school for the middle classes which ‘offered peculiar advantages to clergymen with limited means’ (207). The establishment of schools to provide an education based on denominational principles is reflected in such texts as William Heygate’s *Godfrey Davenant* (1847), where the headmaster of Athelling College strives to foster a common life centred explicitly on Anglican belief and practice.

‘Being true to nature’

By drawing closely on contemporary educational provision to provide the settings for their work, nineteenth-century authors continued to build on the model for the school story genre

Cheltenham Ladies’ College. (See Jean Garriock’s entry on Meade in *The Encyclopaedia of Girls’ School Stories*, Ed. S. Sims and H. Clare, 2000.)

³⁹ It should be emphasised that Stow School is a fictitious establishment, and has no connection with Stowe School in Buckinghamshire which did not exist at the time of publication.

established in the previous century. In doing so, they were concerned not only to portray the diversity of opportunities for schooling which were available to the upper and middle classes during the period under consideration, but also to represent school life in ways which resonated with the experiences of their readers. The intention to use the genre to represent ‘ordinary commonplace schoolboys’ (v) is expressed clearly by Ascott R. Hope, one of the period’s most prolific writers of school fiction, in the preface to his *Stories of School Life* (1868). There he states his conviction ‘that stories [...] made from the incidents and scenes most familiar to them’ (iv) might be as interesting to boys as tales of ‘high-spiced romance’ and ‘improbable or impossible adventures’ (iii-iv), and claims for his own work ‘the one merit of being true to nature’ (v).

Hope himself contrives to convey authenticity through the use of first-person narrative in many of his stories, adopting the perspective of an old pupil of his fictional Whitminster Grammar School. Other writers make similar efforts to convince readers of the accuracy of their picture of contemporary schooling. For example, early editions of *Tom Brown* cite the author simply as ‘An Old Boy’. Titles are often used to suggest that the story reflects personal experience, as in the anonymous *My School-Boy Days* (1844) and *Reminiscences of School Life. A Story for Boys* (1864). Bickersteth’s *School and Home* (1864) is sub-titled *Leaves from a Boy’s Journal*, and is presented partly in the form of the protagonist’s diary, while George Nugent-Bankes’ *About Some Fellows* (1878) purports to be ‘odds and ends’ from his notebook. This story is explicitly set at Eton, and is one of several examples of texts, like those by Hemyng, Hughes and Lennox referred to above, which take their inspiration from named historical institutions. In other stories, such as Percy Fitzgerald’s *School Days at Saxonhurst* (1867) and Frederic Farrar’s *Eric; or, Little by Little* (1858), a fictional school obviously depicts an existing establishment. Fitzgerald clearly uses the Jesuit-run Stonyhurst as a model

for Saxonhurst, and seeks to authenticate his portrayal of the place by assuming the pseudonym ‘One of the Boys’ and by adopting a first-person narrative. In spite of his protestations to the contrary, Frederic Farrar almost certainly based his fictional Roslyn School on another denominational foundation, the Anglican King William’s College in the Isle of Man which he himself had attended.⁴⁰ Although he refuses to identify Roslyn with any particular school, he does claim for *Eric* ‘the merit of truthfulness’ (1858: v), asserting that his experience as a schoolmaster qualifies him to present ‘realities’ and ‘facts’ rather than ‘imaginings’ (vi).

A number of books aimed at girl readers are written by teachers whose first-hand knowledge of schools similarly provides the basis for their work. Anna Maria Sanders states in the Preface to *Clarence House; or, the Misses Camroux’s Establishment* (1853) that in assuming the role of storyteller she deliberately set out to portray life at Claremont, the girls’ seminary she ran in the Old Kent Road, and that ‘the characters are all real ones’ (iv). In stories such as *The Two Sisters* (1820) and *Juliana Oakley* (1825), it is likely that Mary Martha Sherwood draws on her own career as a schoolmistress.⁴¹ Other stories, such as Anna Maria Hall’s *Chronicles of a School Room* (1830), are cast in the form of a teacher’s memoirs, while Sarah Fitton’s *How I Became a Governess* (1861) and Mary Gardiner’s *Auntie Marian’s School-Fellows* (1880) take the form of pupils’ reminiscences. The concern to convey authenticity is further reflected in the sub-titles of several texts, as in Harriet Howe’s *Clara*

⁴⁰ See Patrick Scott’s article ‘The School Novels of Dean Farrar’, *British Journal of Educational Studies* 19.2 (June 1971): 163-82 for detailed evidence in support of his claim that Farrar’s novels were modelled on his experiences as a pupil at the College, as well as his time as a master at Harrow and Marlborough.

⁴¹ An account of the girls’ boarding school she established at Lower Wick near Worcester can be found in *The Life and times of Mrs Sherwood, (1775-1851)*, ed. F.J. Harvey Darton (1910), chapters XVII and XVIII.

Eversham: the Life of a School-Girl. A Narrative Founded upon Fact (1852) and Clara Percy's *The Changeling of Fortune: A Sketch from Real Life* (1830).

Lessons for young readers

Whilst the accurate representation of contemporary educational provision is central to the structure of the evolving school story, it provides much more than a background to events. From the outset, the genre was designed to be instructive. Fielding's professed wish to 'cultivate [...] a love of virtue' (1968: iii) in the young led her explicitly to use her narrative as medium for conveying moral lessons, and her choice of a school setting serves to endorse her teaching. The same purpose is discernible in fiction throughout the nineteenth century. In her Preface to *Chronicles of a School Room*, for example, Hall expresses the hope that her work will not only 'amuse and interest' her readers, but also 'convey lessons that may lead to practical improvement' (vi). Later, in his Preface to *Stories of School Life*, Hope clearly expresses his intention of supplying 'healthy and honest schoolboy literature' (vi) which will point a moral and, where appropriate, show boys 'the error of their ways' (v). Eschewing the sensationalism of the adventure stories he believed distracted young readers from the 'commonplace realities of life' (iv), Hope realises these aims by chronicling the daily lives of imperfect schoolboys in order to illustrate both the problems generated by failure to face and conquer faults, and the benefits accrued when weakness and temptation are overcome.

Like a number of his contemporaries, including such overtly evangelical writers as George Etell Sargent and Susannah Paull, Hope uses a clear authorial voice to deliver his message. Many of his stories conclude with a 'sermon' driving home the moral he has set out to convey. 'I love boys too well to be afraid of speaking the truth to them', he writes at the end of 'Tom's Troubles' (1868), having described 'the evil and dangerous path' which awaits those who, like

Tom, insist always on having their own way (*Stories of School Life*: 439). Typically for the genre at this time, he augments his advice with references to Christian teaching, urging his readers to submit to the will of God by obeying the Commandments. However, elsewhere in such texts, moral teaching is also focused through advice given by an authoritative adult or older pupil. Particularly in the early part of the period, this is often achieved in stories for both boys and girls through the presentation of conversations in dialogue form, continuing an eighteenth-century convention. In Gilbert's *Sketches from a Youthful Circle* (1834), for example, the dramatic format given to Miss Windermere's advice to a new pupil on dealing with homesickness and other hardships confers both directness and a sense of urgency on the question being discussed.

The embedded story, another hallmark of early school fiction, is similarly used by nineteenth-century writers as a device for teaching, thus reinforcing the importance of storytelling as an educational tool. Alongside the dramatic dialogue, this is a further stratagem adopted by Tainsh, whose exemplary Mr Frankson uses parables to address difficulties encountered by his pupils in their day-to-day life at school. Stories illustrating aspects of heroism make up a large part of Hope's *Arthur Fortescue; or, The Schoolboy Hero* (1865), a text designed to show children how they can practise qualities such as courage and humility in their everyday dealings with siblings and school-fellows.

While formal interaction between pupil and teacher provides the context for much of the teaching conveyed in these stories, peer relationships are shown to be an equally important channel for the transmission of moral and spiritual values. Tom Brown's reformation is accomplished through his friendship with the upright George Arthur, whose exhortations and example lead him to renounce cribbing and read his Bible. In Emma Worboise's *Grace Hamilton's School Days* (1856), the protagonist is set on the path of virtue by Margaret

Whittaker, an older pupil who becomes her life-long friend and mentor. As well as delivering advice, such characters provide moral exemplars for readers and for their fictional peers by demonstrating the positive impact of obedience, honesty and similar values on both community life and the development of individual character. In contrast, in many texts the characterisation of the disobedient or dishonest pupil serves as a warning to peers and readers alike. For example, Elinor Geary's *Elsie's Victory* (1876) features a protagonist who is permanently disfigured as a result of conflict with a rival pupil. Elsie later uses the story of how she came by her scar to warn her own children against the effects of jealousy and bad temper. Geary concludes the book by emphasising her intention to help her readers 'in fighting a similar battle against pride and selfishness' (128), thus doubly underlining the significance of story as a vehicle for teaching.

Lessons for teachers

An important feature of the earliest school stories is their concern to address an adult as well as a child audience. This dual objective is also pursued in nineteenth-century texts. In particular, the portrayal of school life often includes both discussion of educational principles and methods and the depiction of their impact on classroom practice. In common with *The Governess*, for example, Hall's *Chronicles of a School Room* (1830) features a schoolmistress who, like Fielding's Mrs Teachum, embraces Locke's theories of education. Rejecting 'coercive measures' (40) in favour of gaining the trust and affection of her pupils, and aiming above all to make learning enjoyable, Mrs Ashburton claims to have cultivated in her girls both 'gentle and feminine virtues' (248) and 'useful and intelligent minds' (206). She uses a series of case studies to illustrate the success of her methods, demonstrating how they ensure that her pupils go out into the world to become 'examples and blessings' (40) to those around

them. In *Frank Vansittart; or, The Model Schoolboys* (1853), Catherine Sinclair advocates a similar approach to the schooling of boys. Much of her text is presented in the form of dialogues in which both adults and children expound and debate contrasting educational philosophies. The outcomes of these are personified in the characters of the three protagonists, two of whom are shown to suffer the effects of ‘an overdone system of education’ (34) which prioritises the memorising of facts and leaves no time for the cultivation of ‘observation, intellect, fancy, or feeling’ (32). Consequently, they ‘are both six feet high in learning, but dwarfs in heart and understanding’ (52). In contrast, the third boy, Frank, has been allowed to be a child, and given time to play and to think for himself. Impressed by his thoughtfulness and kindness to others, his uncle decides to make Frank his heir, observing that ‘the boys most riotously energetic in the playground [are] always the most vigorous in character and acquirements afterwards’ (52).

Both Hall and Sinclair are primarily concerned to commend a particular concept of education, and to depict its impact on pupils. Elsewhere, the effectiveness of the means by which educational theory is translated into practice is often the subject of authorial comment. For example, classroom scenes in these texts are used to exemplify a particular approach to teaching and learning and to consider its effectiveness. The endorsement of storytelling as an educational tool in *Mr Johnston’s School* has already been mentioned. Through his portrayal of the interaction between Mr Frankson and his pupils, Tainsh also shows how walks are used as occasions for the boys to investigate the natural world and to consolidate their learning through asking questions and through classifying and annotating their finds. Introducing a discussion in which Frankson shows his pupils the different parts of a flower, Tainsh comments that ‘he could not have helped teaching them something if he had tried’ (67).

The use of story to convey both information and moral teaching is also shown to be effective in the much more formal setting of the girls' school depicted in Dymond's *Eight Evenings at School* (1825). Here, pupils form 'a happy and deeply-interested group' (33) as they listen to their governess's stories and respond to her encouragement to contribute their own comments and questions. Published in the same year, Sherwood's *Juliana Oakley* (1825) also shows a governess simultaneously entertaining and instructing her pupils by means of 'profitable story' (53). At the same time, she teaches them 'to read in the book of nature' (53) as they explore the 'fairy landscape' (30) in which her school is set.

Voices of protest

Like *The Governess* and its immediate successors, such as William Beloe's *Incidents of Youthful Life* (1790) and Charles and Mary Lamb's *Mrs Leicester's School* (1808), these texts aimed to advance positive educational goals. Consequently their representation of school is generally favourable, and even idealised. However, not all fiction affirms the value of school. At the end of the eighteenth century a more critical tradition had already begun to emerge in which writers used the genre to protest against what they saw as serious shortcomings in contemporary educational provision. The anonymous *History of a Schoolboy* (1788) and Dorothy Kilner's *Anecdotes of a Boarding School* (1790) both depict institutions in which adults are unreliable, and pupils are poorly supervised and freely indulge in bullying and dishonesty. They thus identify significant shortcomings in the curriculum, teaching methods and organisation of schools for both boys and girls.

The use of the genre to offer a critique of contemporary educational thinking and practice is continued and developed throughout the nineteenth century, with many writers overtly using the school setting to explore some of the urgent issues which preoccupied the press,

Parliament, the Church and academia, as well as individuals actively involved in the work of schooling. They do this selectively, focusing mainly on matters which impact directly upon the child, and which can be explored imaginatively through the depiction of character and relationships, or through metaphor. While politicians and civil servants give close consideration to the administration of the educational system as a whole, writers of fiction choose mainly to concentrate on the organisation and management of individual institutions, on roles, relationships and responsibilities within the school community, and on the impact of the curriculum and styles of teaching.

Much of the criticism expressed in the school novel is directed towards the private academies. Although the informal, domestic model of girls' education which is celebrated in texts such as *Eight Evenings at School* is endorsed in fiction throughout the period 1820-1880, the failure of many schools to realise the ideal in practice is exposed by many writers. Like Kilner, a number focus on the poor moral tone characteristic of some establishments. New pupils are often shocked by the conduct of their schoolfellows. Helen Knight's Annie Sherwood (1847), for example, discovers that many of the girls at Miss Wallace's school are persistently deceitful and disobedient, while the less daring provide encouragement by laughing at their exploits. In Emilia Marryat's *Theodora* (1870), the protagonist finds that a similar situation is exacerbated by the teachers, who 'toady' to the wealthier pupils and fail to correct their faults. The result is a 'shabby and mean' (85) culture in which pupils from less well-to-do homes become victims of unrelenting ridicule and bullying at the hands of their peers.

The importance attached by many girls' schools to the acquisition of such social accomplishments as music, dancing and drawing, and the consequent neglect of basic academic education, is censured in a number of fictional texts. The anonymous *The Boarding*

School (1823), for example, contrasts the solid teaching Caroline Vincent receives at Mrs Adair's school with the inadequacies of the training given at the 'fashionable seminary' (26) she has attended previously. After seven years with 'the first masters' (16), her playing displays 'no taste, feeling, or judgement in the execution' (17). Further, although 'instructed in all the sciences' and having 'learned the art of memorizing by hieroglyphics' (27-8), she does not know the multiplication table. Another anonymous text, *Harriette Browne's School-Days* (1859), similarly depicts the damaging effects of education for 'display' at the expense of intellectual and moral training. Here, the shortcomings of Forester House are directly attributed to the incompetence of teachers who are shown to 'encourage, both by conversation and example, the very vanity and follies which it is their duty to eradicate' (48). Most seriously, Mrs Durrett, the school's proprietor, exercises minimal supervision of pupils or staff, believing 'that it was perfectly unnecessary for a person of her fortune and pretensions to have to bother herself about the business of the school-rooms' (3).

Given the lack of training of most staff in girls' schools at this time, it is not surprising that foolish and incompetent teachers appear in many contemporary stories. One example is the aptly named Miss Frivol in Mary Hughes' *The Rebellious Schoolgirl* (1821). Her prejudices and willingness to jump to conclusions lead to the suspension of the most virtuous girl in the school, and to the serious injury and near death of the friend who leaps (literally) to her defence. Another inept teacher is Miss Careless in Edis Searle's much later *Maggie's Mistake* (1874). She, however, is dismissed when her lack of supervision results in a serious accident to one of the girls. The highly proficient Miss Power, who replaces her, rapidly restores order and eventually persuades the pupils of the importance of learning. While this book illustrates the weaknesses which continued to characterise many unregulated establishments, it also

points to the kinds of reforms in management and teaching which were urgently needed in girls' schools.

The case for reform had been set out most forcefully in the report of the Taunton Commission of 1865-7. As well as taking evidence from such educationalists as Emily Davies, Dorothea Beale and Frances Buss,⁴² all of whom had written and lectured extensively on issues relating to female education, the Commissioners also visited and collected information about a significant number of girls' schools. While they found widespread parental support for such establishments, based on the belief that they led 'to the production and confirmation of gentle and feminine characters' (SIC vol. IX: 560), they judged that the quality of formal education girls received was often poor. Only a handful of schools were run by trained teachers,⁴³ and while considerable emphasis was placed on the acquisition of accomplishments, such as music, basic subjects were neglected, or taught using outdated and ineffective methods.⁴⁴ The Commissioners highlighted '[w]ant of thoroughness and foundation; want of system; slovenliness and showy superficiality; inattention to rudiments; undue time given to accomplishments... [and] want of organization' (SIC vol.1: 549). They were also critical of the ethos prevailing in schools where, as in some fictional texts, the

⁴² See SIC vol. V: 232-267 for minutes of the evidence submitted by Emily Davies and Frances Buss, and 723-747 for the evidence of Dorothea Beale and Elizabeth Wolstenholme. All highlight issues relating to the training of teachers and the scope of the curriculum.

⁴³ Mr D.R. Fearon's report on London schools showed that for the hundred private girls' schools for which he had data, only six had qualified principals. In eight schools, assistant teachers had received some training (SIC vol. VII: 557-60).

⁴⁴ Analysis of timetables in a sample of Lancashire schools showed that, on average, 1/4 of the total time available was allocated to music, and 1/13 to arithmetic which was 'seldom scientifically taught' (SIC vol. XIII: 72). In the same schools, the inspector found, 'Magnall's Questions and versified histories of England were still held in honour. Pianos resounded all day long and in every room' (73).

schoolmistresses themselves ‘speak slightly of mental cultivation, and set before them as the great aim of life to be attractive and to make conquests’ (SIC vol. IX: 289).

Exposing deficiencies in the boys’ schools

The Commissioners judged that many of the private academies for boys were also ‘lamentably unsatisfactory’ (SIC vol. I: 284). One witness commented ‘that fully one half of them might be suppressed with great advantage to the community’ (SIC vol. I: 285). While more were likely to have qualified staff,⁴⁵ others were judged to be run by ‘puffers, quacks, and imposters of all kinds’ (SIC vol. VII: 367). Teaching often relied on rote learning and the use of catechisms conveying only ‘scrappy and incoherent’ facts (SIC vol. IX: 273-5). Precarious discipline was maintained by the use of corporal punishment in the majority of schools. Although he found some devoted and enthusiastic schoolmasters ⁴⁶ in the West Riding, and examined classes which worked ‘with intelligence and life’ (SIC vol. IX: 257), Mr J.G. Fitch still considered that too many schools were poorly organised, used resources inefficiently, and failed to provide the family atmosphere promised in their prospectuses and advertisements. He reassured the Commission: ‘I have wholly failed to discover any examples of the typical Yorkshire boarding school with which Nicholas Nickleby has made us familiar’ (SIC vol. IX: 262), but nevertheless concluded his report by stating:

Each method of education has its advantages, but the private boarding school has very few. It has no history, no ennobling traditions, no public spirit, none of the great strifes and trials which make a school “an image of the mighty world”; and, on the other hand, it is as little like a home as if it possessed all these things. (SIC vol. IX: 266)

⁴⁵ Fearon’s analysis of staff in 130 private schools for boys in London revealed that about half the principals, but less than a quarter of assistant teachers, had some sort of qualification. A third of the schools were run entirely by untrained staff. (SIC vol. VII: 557-60)

⁴⁶ See for example SIC vol. IX: 256.

A number of school stories focus on these concerns. In the anonymous *The Adventures of a Schoolboy* (1826), for instance, the writer deliberately sets out to subvert the ideal of the school as a happy family in which learning is both effective and pleasurable. The Castle is described as a ‘dismal-looking edifice’ (65) as unlike Henry Morton’s comfortable home as it could be. Mealtimes are particularly grim, not only because of the unappetising food, but also because they reveal the pupils’ lack of social graces and any sense of mutual care and concern: ‘home flitted before my eyes. No hot-buttered toast, no tea, no sweet-meats, no comfortable fireside or endearing conversation: everyone was busy with his own – none to attend to the comfort of another’ (74). Henry is so unhappy at The Castle that he is unable to learn, and absconds when an examination approaches. Another truant, the narrator of George Melly’s *School Experiences of a Fag at a Private and Public School* (1854), runs away from Elm-house to escape the persistent persecution to which he is subjected by a group of ‘big dunces’ (39), whom the staff appear powerless to control. Although few fictional pupils resort to such extreme measures, many struggle with the academic side of school life, and brutal treatment for failure is a feature of a number of stories. For example, in *Solomon’s Precept* (1861), an overtly polemical text advocating the systematic inspection of all schools, repeated floggings render the protagonist so ‘embittered, and broken in spirit’ (133) that ‘he gradually subside[s] into the “fool of the school” ’ (135).

In order to expose the weaknesses of the private academies, some writers contrast them unfavourably with the much more prestigious public schools. The protagonists in both *The Adventures of a Schoolboy* and *School Experiences of a Fag* move on to establishments modelled on Eton and Rugby which are described in glowing terms. Henry Morton writes home to say that he is ‘comfortable and happy’ at his new school and could desire ‘nothing

more' (170). In comparing 'Harby' with the private 'Elm-house' where he had suffered 'persecution and tyranny' (86), Melly does acknowledge the existence of 'open drinking, and habitual smoking' (196) and of 'low conversation' (198) in some houses. However, overall he portrays an institution where '[z]ealous students were rather the rule than the exception' (121) and where he only 'once saw a flogging' (107). His fondest memories are of the carved angels in the chapel which 'exert an almost celestial influence' (158), and of the 'snug' study which provides a refuge from the winter weather, and an opportunity to '[p]ile up the fire...and...be jovial!' (179).

The prevalence of anti-social behaviour in many boys' boarding schools, and the widespread practices of fagging and flogging, are, however, the focus of comment and criticism in many stories. The existence of such problems was well-known. Throughout the century they were reported in the newspapers, debated in the periodical press, and highlighted in memoirs and autobiographies. Articles such as 'Flogging and fagging at Winchester', published in the *Quarterly Journal of Education* in 1834, set out to expose a barbaric culture of 'authorised violence' (84). In 1860-61, the inadequacies of the curriculum and inefficiency of the teaching at Eton were the subject of three letters to the *Cornhill Magazine* by Matthew James Higgins writing under the pseudonym 'Paterfamilias'. Such writing was influential in leading to the appointment in 1861 of the Clarendon Commission to investigate the nine 'great schools'. While the main concern of its members was to make recommendations about the governance of the schools, the monitorial system, and the fagging and exercise of discipline it entailed, was a major focus of their questioning, specifically of former and current pupils. Its report, published in 1864, noted 'a great and progressive improvement' in these establishments over the previous 20 years, concluding that the endemic bullying, brutal physical punishment and unspeakably squalid living conditions of the early part of the century were 'now only matters

of history and tradition' (PSC vol. I: 66). In spite of these reforms, however, they still identified significant problems. These included an inadequate curriculum at Eton, where 'construing, repetition and composition [were] the chief employment of the upper forms' (PSC vol. I: 13), and the abuse of the fagging system at Charterhouse and Westminster, where older boys were found to exercise their powers 'capriciously, and with very undue severity' (PSC vol. I: 162). The use of corporal punishment, though believed to be diminishing, was still common, and frequent at Eton and Charterhouse. The delegation of disciplinary powers to monitors and prefects was open to abuse, and had the capacity to 'become an instrument of positive evil' in 'unfit hands' (PSC vol. I: 42). Fagging was excessive at Winchester and Westminster, where younger boys were expected to get up at 4.00am to light fires for their seniors. At Westminster, too, bullying went unchecked.

The abuses which continued to characterise such institutions are censured in a number of the public school stories which began to appear with greater frequency in the second half of the century. William Lennox's *Percy Hamilton; or, the Adventures of a Westminster Boy* (1851) portrays a brutal institution where the lot of the fags is likened to that of 'galley-slaves' (53). These defects of the public school system are exposed at their most extreme in Henry Pullen's *The Ground Ash* (1874), where the Praepostors actually beat a younger boy to death.

The new boys' schools founded in the 1830s and 1840s also had their shortcomings. The need to keep fees low and numbers high resulted in serious problems in some. One contributor to a history of Marlborough College cites 'hunger' and 'crowded dormitories' as well as inadequate staffing as contributory factors in the famous 'Rebellion' of 1851.⁴⁷ James Wilson, who entered King William's College in 1848, describes an institution where 'the teaching I

⁴⁷ See F.M. Haywood, *Marlborough College 1843-1943* (1943): 15. Haywood comments, 'To provide lodging, board, education and adequate supervision for thirty guineas a year...was an impossibility'.

imagine [was] almost as bad as it could be' and where the boys 'suffered also from dirt and slovenliness, from insufficient food, from horrible bullying and indecencies indescribable'.⁴⁸

Such grievances act as catalysts for revolt in several fictional texts. Wilson was a contemporary of Frederic Farrar, whose *Roslyn School* reflects many of the serious deficiencies he describes in his autobiography. *Eric* is the study of an individual dissident, and while Farrar attributes his protagonist's downfall chiefly to his own innate 'pride and rebellion' (63), he makes it clear that bullying and excessive physical punishment exacerbate his faults and contribute to his growing alienation from his peers as well as from the school authorities.

In Fitzgerald's *The Boys of Saxonhurst* the resentment fuelled by dissatisfaction with the food and anger at unjust punishment is expressed collectively. Conflict between boys and masters is frequently described in explicitly political terms, highlighting the powerlessness of the pupils in relation to the staff. Mutiny also features strongly in the anonymous *How It Was Done at Stow School*, where the education the boys receive from ill-qualified and incompetent masters is deplorable, and the discipline brutal. The Headmaster states, 'Boys are sent here to work. If they will not do their work they will be flogged. If flogging does not mend them, they will be flogged again. If that fails, they will be expelled' (12). The viciousness of the régime leads the boys to rebel against both the Headmaster and the monitors and the situation is only resolved, somewhat dramatically, when the Headmaster is dismissed after twenty boys run away in one night. The main focus of this book is on the internal management and organisation of the school, as well as on the poor quality of teaching the writer believes to be characteristic of many of the new foundations for the middle classes. He contrasts Stow

⁴⁸ See *James M. Wilson: an Autobiography 1836-1931* (1932).

explicitly with ‘the best kind of old-fashioned grammar school’ (203) from which one clergyman’s son transfers, only to experience ‘unmitigated misery’ (203).

While writers such as Pullen and Fitzgerald exploit the school story genre to deliver uncompromising criticism of the boys’ schools, others use it to present a more complex picture, attempting to balance the strengths and the weaknesses of these establishments, and to reflect the tension between the ideal and the reality of the public school. For instance, in Henry Adams’ *Schoolboy Honour* (1861), Halminster College supplies an idyllic setting, ‘grey and venerable, with the Chapel and the Tower forming the centre’ (20), and ‘the playing fields with their velvet turf’ (2) stretching beyond. However, Adams firmly rejects the notion of schools as ‘moral paradises’ (41). At Halminster, relationships amongst the boys are characterised by ‘selfishness [...] harshness, and the treachery of others’ (41), as well as by loyal friendship. Unlike writers who focus almost exclusively on the shortcomings of these schools, Adams aims to depict the struggle for justice played out upon an institutional as well as an individual level. In so doing, he likens the school to ‘the great world of which it is an image’ (41), showing how the response to its challenges is a valid means of preparing pupils for the assumption of adult roles involving the exercise of responsibility and moral choice within the wider society.

Separate spheres

Underpinning both fictional and theoretical educational writing of the period were models of formal schooling which were largely determined by contemporary notions of gender. These prescribed opposing social identities for boys and girls based on understandings of biological difference and expressed in contrasting but supposedly complementary roles. As Joan Burstyn (1980) states succinctly in her study of the development of women’s education in nineteenth-

century Britain, 'the Victorian middle classes did not expect girls to participate in schooling for the same purpose as boys. [...] Separate spheres located women in the home and men in the marketplace' (18-19). A woman's role as selfless wife and mother was idealised in Coventry Patmore's much-quoted poem 'The Angel in the House' (1854-1862), which contrasted her passivity and 'undeficient grace' (Patmore 1949: 90) with the aggression, ambition and restless activity displayed by her husband. This concept of 'separate spheres' was rooted in what Ruskin termed the 'separate characters' of men and women, defined most famously in his lecture 'Of Queens' Gardens' (1865):

The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is ultimately the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest [...]. But the woman's power is for rule, not for battle, – and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision. [...] The man, in his rough work in the world, must encounter all peril and trial [...]. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offence. This is the true nature of home [...]. and wherever a true wife comes, this home is always round her. (Ruskin *Collected Works*, 1913. Vol. 39: 59-60)

This notion informed much contemporary thinking about the purpose and organisation of schooling. Elizabeth Sewell, for example, adopted the concept of the 'well-ordered household' as a model for female education in both theory and practice. Her own school at Ashcliff in the Isle of Wight was run in the family home, while in *Principles of Education* (1867) she drew a clear distinction between the type of school appropriate for girls and that suited to the needs of boys.

The aim of education is to fit children for the position in life which they are hereafter to occupy. Boys are to be sent out into the world to buffet with its temptations, to mingle with bad and good, to govern and direct. The school is the type of the life they are hereafter to lead. Girls are to dwell in quiet homes, among a few friends; to exercise a noiseless influence, to be submissive and retiring. [...] This alone is sufficient reason for supposing [...] that to educate girls in crowds is to educate them wrongly. [...] And so also the spirit of independence and determination, the conflict of opinion, the roughness even of a large school are congenial to a boy's nature, they are utterly opposed to that of a girl. (1867: 396-7)

For boys, school was conceived as the world in miniature, ‘a place where they form a complete society among themselves – a society in its essential parts similar, and therefore preparatory, to the society of men’ (*The Rugby Magazine* No. 2, October 1835: 96). In the words of Edward Thring, headmaster of Uppingham from 1853 to 1887, such a society granted pupils ‘the priceless boon’ of ‘learning to be responsible, and independent, to bear pain, to drop rank, and wealth, and home luxury’ and so attain ‘manliness’ (Quoted in Honey 1977: 146).

The different destinations of boys and girls were reflected in the promotional materials issued by schools. The 1833 prospectus for King’s College School, for instance, stressed the importance of preparing boys ‘for commercial as well as professional pursuits’. In contrast, an 1828 advertisement for Miss Ritchie’s Establishment for Young Ladies in Rotherhithe emphasised the priority given to the cultivation of pupils’ ‘Morals and Deportment’.⁴⁹ As one informant to the Schools Inquiry Commission put it, ‘Boys are educated for the world and girls for the drawing-room’ (SIC vol. IX: 793).

Unsurprisingly, many fictional texts – around two-thirds of the corpus considered here – reflect and endorse the concept of the school as a key site for the construction of gender identity. For example, in Edward Monro’s *Eustace; or, The Lost Inheritance* (1863), the protagonist’s relations identify the advantages formal schooling can offer a delicate boy taught hitherto at home.

[T]here is a vacuum filled up by school life, which no other education in the world can

⁴⁹ Advertisement in *The Boarding School and London Masters’ Directory* (London: Whittaker, 1828).

supply; a boy can never be a man without it. The public school gives him the world in epitome, all its rules, laws, codes of honour, and temptations; he can never have these at home. (5)

For a girl, school life is frequently seen as a means of preparing her for life in the domestic sphere through the cultivation of such characteristics as submissiveness and selflessness. In Kathleen Knox's *Captain Eva* (1880), for instance, the widowed Colonel Raymond is persuaded to send his rebellious daughter, who wishes 'ardently to be a boy and a soldier' (26), to Mrs Sunbury's school at Fairy Hill in the hope that female society and the demands of communal life will teach her obedience and humility.

Challenges to gender norms

Nevertheless, as John Tosh (1999) has argued, the boundaries between male and female spheres were often blurred, with men and boys shaped by family life as well as the customs and practices of single-sex schools. The roles filled by women and girls were also more diverse in reality than those delineated by Ruskin and Patmore. Kathryn Gleadle, for example, has drawn attention to the growing body of research on women's contribution to culture, politics and philanthropy which calls into question their supposed 'confinement to a world of child care and domesticity' (2001: 4). As Emily Davies observed, 'we know, as a fact, that women have a part in the world, and that men are no mean ciphers in the home circle' (1888: 13).

Inevitably, this overlapping of spheres gave rise to some tensions in educational theory and practice. For example, while emphasising that the purpose of education was to bring boys to 'manhood' (Arnold 1833: 86), Thomas Arnold criticised the public schools for undermining familial relationships, and warned his pupils against becoming 'strangers to domestic feelings and affections' (83). While advocating an intellectual training for girls which was equal to that

given to boys, and which would gain them admission to the universities and professions, many of the reformers of female education were also anxious for their students to observe the proprieties of conduct and dress expected of their sex. Martha Vicinus observes that this placed girls in ‘a double bind [...] [T]hey had to be equal to if not better than men intellectually, while not losing one iota of their feminine respectability’ (Vicinus 1985: 134).

Some fiction reflects this questioning of both the existence of a clear division of spheres, and the assumptions about sexual differences upon which the concept was based. Claudia Nelson has shown how a number of fictional texts for boys validate feminine characteristics in their male protagonists. She argues, for instance, that for Hughes’ Tom Brown, ‘[m]anliness involves motherliness’ (Nelson 1991: 42), and that his moral growth is facilitated by his care for George Arthur. She demonstrates too that in this novel, Hughes offers several perspectives on masculinity which embrace Arthur’s frailty as well as the brutality of Flashman, the eccentricity of Martin, and the ‘boyishness’ of Harry East and Tom himself. Elsewhere, in *Ludovic; or, The Boy’s Victory* (1868), Sophie Prosser describes how the ‘rough’ John Armstrong is transformed ‘into a gentle nurse’ (21) through undertaking the traditionally female role of caring for his delicate schoolfellow. The sensitivity he gains enables him to exert ‘a happy influence’ (122) in a school where bullying is rife, and in no way detracts from his ability to go on to serve with distinction in the Indian Army.

A significant number of stories for girls similarly feature female characters who deviate in some way from accepted gender norms. As I shall discuss further in Chapter 6, almost all texts in my corpus portray independent women who work as schoolmistresses. While some, such as the Middlemass sisters in *Poplar House Academy* (1859), take up teaching out of financial necessity and renounce work for domesticity as soon as they find suitable husbands, others, including Mrs Midhurst in Elizabeth Hart’s *Two Fourpenny Bits* (1880) and Kathleen Knox’s

Rachel Reilly, choose it as a lifelong vocation. A highly gifted teacher, and respected by colleagues and pupils alike, Miss Reilly is depicted as an unusual role model, being ‘tall and gaunt in figure, coarse complexioned and large featured’ (1880: 49), and skilled in carpentry as well as art and music. The unconventional protagonist in *Harrie; or, Schoolgirl Life in Edinburgh*, challenges gender expectations not only by working to support her family, but also by cropping her hair and using a boy’s name. Portrayed alongside more conventionally feminine characters, both Harrie and Miss Reilly offer a model of womanhood which calls into question the ideals enshrined in the concept of separate spheres.

Much nineteenth-century educational debate revolves around the contribution of different forms of schooling to the development of gender identity. In particular, discussion of the place of the home in the preparation of both boys and girls for adult roles and responsibilities is a theme explored in both literary and extra-literary texts. In the next chapter I shall examine ways in which home and school are represented as both competing and complementary sites for schooling in selected fiction and non-fiction, focusing particularly on the part played by each in the moral and spiritual formation deemed appropriate for the two sexes.

Chapter 2

‘Every home a school’? The place of domestic education in school fiction

‘ “The question is,” said the Squire to the Parson, ‘What shall I do with my boy?’ ” (1874: 3). Thus opens Henry Pullen’s *The Ground Ash* published in 1874. Nigel Risley, the boy under discussion, has outgrown his governess, and his father is considering the next stage of his education. Almost half of this novel is devoted to a convoluted debate between the two men on the advantages and shortcomings of a public school education compared with domestic schooling, particularly in relation to its moral and spiritual aspects. The second half describes how the solution Squire Risley devises for his son – a period with a private tutor, followed by Weston, the school attended by the Rector’s own sons – proves disastrous. The culture of Weston is pervaded by the cruelty and violence inherent in the practices of fagging and flogging, discussed in the previous chapter, and the story ends with the boy’s death after a public thrashing at the hands of the prefects, whose claim to be both ‘Christian-like’ and ‘gentlemanly’(211) is exposed as hypocrisy.

The public versus private debate in 18th century educational writing

While the polemical stance taken by Pullen is extreme, the dilemma he expresses is not new. Squire Risley’s question echoes that posed by Locke almost two centuries earlier. In response to the hypothetical query, ‘What shall I do with my son?’ (1693: ¶70),⁵⁰ he outlined the dangers of both ‘private’ education in the home, and ‘public’ education at school:

If I keep him always at home, he will be in danger to be my young master, and if I send him abroad, how is it possible to keep him from the contagion of rudeness and vice, which is

⁵⁰ Quotations from Locke’s *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* [1693] are taken from the text edited by J.W. and J.S Yolton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

everywhere in fashion?

However, because Locke saw the fundamental task of the teacher as being ‘to settle in his pupil good habits, and the principles of virtue and wisdom’ (§94), he concluded that such training could only be given in the home, for even the most conscientious schoolmaster could not give the requisite ‘constant attention, and particular application to every single boy’ (§70). Similar arguments for and against the private schooling of boys dominated the educational thinking of the late eighteenth century in England. Followers of Locke such as Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Joseph Priestley were strenuous in their criticism of formal schooling.⁵¹ On the other hand, Vicesimus Knox opposed his views as ‘useless’ and ‘pernicious’ (vol. I, 1781): 236, arguing that it was only in the company of others that boys could learn to practise virtue, and acquire the qualities that would enable them to take their place in society. Further, he maintained that peer emulation and competition were essential to intellectual growth.

Knox’s contribution to the home versus school debate was innovative in giving significant consideration to the education of girls as well as to boys’ schooling. Locke and Priestley had been concerned exclusively with the teaching of boys, while Edgeworth’s discussion of female education concentrated on the identification of the skills needed to make a girl ‘essentially serviceable in the instruction of her family’ (vol. III, 1801): 29. Knox proposed that girls should follow the same academic curriculum as boys. However, he opposed their formal schooling on the basis that ‘the corruption of girls is more fatal in its consequences to society than that of boys; and that as girls are destined to private and domestic life [...] their education

⁵¹ Echoing Locke, Edgeworth warned against the ‘dangerous effects of that mixed society at schools’ in *Practical Education* (vol. II, 1798): 376, while in *Miscellaneous Observations Relating to Education* (1778), Priestley asserted that the conversation of his peers would lead the schoolboy ‘to contract such early habits of debauchery, as will irreparably hurt his constitution, and make his life wretched and short’ (50).

should be respectively correspondent to their destination' (vol. I, 1781): 331. The view that schools were particularly damaging to girls, undermining their femininity and failing to equip them to become dutiful daughters, wives and mothers, was expressed by a number of commentators⁵² of the period. For example, J. Louis Chirol warned against 'the promiscuous multitude of good and bad' to be found in girls' boarding schools (Chirol 1809: 111), advocating that 'a young lady should be gradually accustomed to the world by a pious and discreet mother' (117). Erasmus Darwin was virtually unique in his support of public schooling for girls, citing the opportunities it gave for 'imitating others' and for 'teaching each other' (1797: 115-6) as among the 'advantages of a school-education [...] over that in a private family' (115).

Michèle Cohen suggests that by the end of the eighteenth century, the home versus school argument had become polarised; 'Public schooling had come to represent the "natural" site for the development of boys' masculine identity, and private, domestic education the "natural" site for the development of girls' feminine identity' (2004: 25). However, this view is an over-simplification. The conflicting claims of home and school as settings for learning, particularly for the moral and religious formation of the child, continued to run right through nineteenth-century educational discourse. There were increasingly those who advocated schools for girls, just as there were detractors from the general view that schools were the most appropriate sites for boys' education. The question is widely explored and debated both in fiction and in a wide variety of non-fictional discourses. In this chapter, I examine some of the ways in which school narratives and these non-literary 'co-texts' debate this issue in

⁵² See for example John Bennett, *Strictures on Female Education* (1787); Francis Foster, *Thoughts on the Times, but Chiefly on the Profligacy of Women* (1779); and J. Louis Chirol, *An Enquiry into the Best System of Female Education* (1809).

parallel, with a major focus on the commonalities and discrepancies in the writings on schooling of Harriet Martineau and Elizabeth Sewell. As indicated in the Introduction, I shall consider provision for boys and girls separately because there are marked differences in both narrative and contemporary theoretical approaches to the education of each.

The nineteenth-century public versus private debate and the education of boys

As Pullen's fictionalised discussion demonstrates, the potential of schools to expose boys to corrupting influences, both morally and socially, was a matter for continuing disquiet during the nineteenth century. The reformist headmaster Thomas Arnold famously elaborated on John Bowdler's charge that 'public schools are the very seats and nurseries of vice,' asserting:

That is properly a nursery of vice, where a boy unlearns the pure and honest principles which he may have received at home, and gets, in their stead, others which are utterly low, and base, and mischievous; where he loses his modesty, his respect for truth, and his affectionateness, and becomes coarse, and false, and unfeeling. (1833: 80)

Significantly, Arnold's own children were educated mainly at home by governesses and a tutor, his sons eventually entering Rugby as day boys.⁵³ Day schooling remained his ideal because it combined 'all the opportunities of forming lasting friendships with those of their own age which a public school so largely affords, [...] with the opportunity of keeping up all their home affections' (1833: 83). At the same time, throughout his fourteen years at Rugby, he worked to minimise the perceived discrepancies between the values transmitted by home and school which preoccupied him as both parent and teacher. He repeatedly warned his pupils of the dangers of peer pressure, and of forgetting the wishes and example of their parents in their desire to win the approval of 'all the worthless and foolish boys around [them]' (1833: 140). He consistently emphasised the importance of the home as a place of education,

⁵³ For details of the education of Arnold's children, see T.W. Bamford, *Thomas Arnold* (1960): 107-116.

particularly in the cultivation of Christian morality, and in the nurturing of ‘duties of kindness’ (152) and ‘affections for others’ (228). He defined the relationship between boys and masters as being ‘like that of children and parents’ (115). Certain ideals of family life lay at the heart of his educational philosophy. ‘[L]et us do what we will’, he urged his pupils, ‘how can we render the Sunday evening here, such as you find it in a well-ordered family at home’(253).

Much contemporary boys’ fiction echoes Arnold’s concerns, representing school as a place of temptation, and affirming the key role of the family in fostering moral and spiritual values. In Emily May’s *Louis’ Schooldays* (1851) for example, Louis Mortimer is warned on his arrival at Ashfield House Academy that he ‘will find many things so different from home’ (1851:15). The headmaster advises him: ‘unless you are constantly on your guard, you will often be likely to do things which may afterwards cause you hours of pain’ (15). Louis rapidly discovers that the boys readily tolerate stealing and cribbing, but do not condone tale-bearing, even if shielding a fellow pupil involves untruthfulness. He falls under the influence of ‘some of the worst boys in the school’ (273), neglects his work, and connives at wrong-doing. Only the recollection of his parents’ teaching causes him to repent and ultimately to pass ‘through the ordeal of school-life with credit to himself and his relations’ (350). In *Dashwood Priory* (1855), the book’s sequel, May goes on to show how the school also taxes Louis’ physical strength. When he becomes ill during his final year at Ashfield and collapses due to overwork, the doctor orders ‘the very acceptable prescription of home’ (95). There, after a period of convalescence, Louis resumes his studies with his brother Neville who, ‘though educated at home, was quite his equal’ (127).

While May clearly prefers the values and gentler régime of home to the moral, physical and intellectual demands of school, other writers of both fiction and educational theory suggest that these trials may ultimately help to strengthen a boy. Although deploring many aspects of

school culture, Arnold himself also argued that it provided a ‘wilderness’ in which pupils were prepared to meet the temptations and challenges of adult life.

[W]hen we see [...] that they have been tried, and grown up amidst the trial; that the knowledge of evil has made them hate it the more, and be the more aware of it; then [...] we see that the wilderness has been gone through triumphantly, and that its dangers have hardened and strengthened the traveller for all his remaining pilgrimage. (1841: 8)

This perspective is endorsed in a number of fictional texts. In Martineau’s *The Crofton Boys* (1841), the protagonist Hugh Proctor acquires courage and determination only through confronting and overcoming the trials he undergoes at school. I shall examine Martineau’s exploration of the relative contributions of home and school to his development in some detail later in this chapter. Here, I simply want to highlight her representation of Hugh’s experience of school as a rite of passage essential to the achievement of moral maturity. Similarly, in Mary Martha Sherwood’s *Robert and Frederick* (1842), school, described by Frederick Moss’s new schoolmaster as ‘the only place for a boy’ (112), works a dramatic reformation in a child who has learnt almost nothing at home.

In their portrayal of protagonists who fail to develop either morally or intellectually while being taught at home, Martineau and Sherwood point to some of the limitations of domestic education for boys. These inadequacies were increasingly acknowledged as the nineteenth century progressed. While the educational theorists of the eighteenth century stressed the primary importance of moral and religious education, their successors recognised the growing need to equip boys intellectually to enter the new occupations opened up by urbanisation, population growth, and the expansion of manufacturing and commerce. In a number of fictional texts, the protagonist is sent to school because parents, tutors or governesses lack the expertise to provide the education a boy needs to embark upon a career. Thus in Alfred Grayson’s *The Gentleman Cadet* (1875), the haphazard teaching Robert Shepard has received

from his father proves to be a totally inadequate preparation for entry to the Woolwich Royal Military Academy, and he is moved to a school which specialises in ‘cramming’ boys for examinations. Other writers highlight the vulnerability of home education to changing family circumstances. In the anonymous *Adventures of a Schoolboy* (1826), Henry Morton is sent to school when his mother becomes too ill to teach him, while in Edward Monro’s *Basil the Schoolboy* (1854), the protagonist goes to school when his mother dies.

Home, school and the education of the 19th century girl

The fragility and inadequacy of much domestic education are also recurring themes in contemporary fiction for girls. As in the boys’ stories mentioned above, it is often shown as being interrupted or curtailed when mothers become ill, or die, as in Emma Worboise’s *Grace Hamilton’s School Days* (1856). Elsewhere, its effectiveness is portrayed as being undermined by unskilled teachers. For example, in Edis Searle’s *Maggie’s Mistake* (1874), Maggie’s untrained Aunt Sophia is totally incapable of managing her at home. She cannot remember anything about her lessons ‘except that Aunt did nothing but scold, and [she] did nothing but cry’ (1874: 9). Deemed to be out of control, Maggie is sent to a boarding school at the age of only nine.

The shortcomings of home schooling at the hands of family members are also highlighted in several autobiographical accounts of early nineteenth-century childhood. For instance, Harriet Martineau was highly critical of the teaching she received from her older siblings: ‘We did not get on well, except with the Latin. Our sister [...] had not been herself carried so far as to have much resource as a teacher. As for Henry [...], he was far too young to play schoolmaster’ (1983:1, 53-4). In contrast, she describes her experience of school as ‘delectable’ (61). Martineau was exceptionally fortunate in spending two years at a day school originally

established to provide a classical education for boys, and later in attending a Bristol boarding school which allowed her to pursue her interests in philosophy, history and poetry.⁵⁴

Shortly after Martineau had finished her education, Frances Broadhurst, the principal of a boarding school in Bath, published *A Word in Favour of Female Schools* (1826) in which she argues for the expansion of formal schooling for girls. She depicts an effective establishment where pupils benefit from discipline, specialised teaching and the stimulus of companionship, distinguishing it from the typical home schoolroom where mothers and governesses rarely possess the qualifications needed to teach young girls, and where lessons are constantly interrupted by the demands of family life. By the 1860s, such criticism of girls' domestic education had become widespread. The inability of even the 'best mothers' or governesses to educate girls to more than the very basic level they had attained themselves remained a particular problem. As Emily Davies asked when setting out her proposals for a college for women, '[I]f neither governesses or mothers *know*, how can they teach?' (1868: 87).

Davies and her fellow campaigners for the expansion of educational opportunities for women were especially concerned with the needs of academically able girls, and of those who would need to earn their own living. The plight of such girls is also highlighted in fiction. In Susannah Paull's *Mabel's School Days* (1872), sixteen-year-old Mabel Clifford, a girl of 'intellectual tastes' (1872: 26), cannot go to school until her eldest brother has finished his studies. Meanwhile, she is taught by her mother and visiting masters at home, her progress hindered by the many household tasks she is expected to undertake. Once at school she is able to write: 'I hope to get on with my studies: it is so nice to have a certain time for everything,

⁵⁴ See Martineau's *Autobiography* [1877] ed. G. Wiener (1983), vol. 1: 61-69 and 92-96. The limited opportunities for the formal academic education of girls are highlighted in Chapter 1, and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

and no fear of interruption' (71). However, although she portrays Mabel's studious nature sympathetically, and emphasises both the inadequacy and the injustice of the teaching she receives at home, Paull does not address the feminist arguments for the academic education of women, accentuating rather the moral virtues of 'humility', 'firmness' and self-control (132) which the girls acquire at Beulah House. Mabel accepts that while her brothers are being prepared for professional careers, she, though equally able, is destined for a purely domestic role.⁵⁵

In spite of the clear limitations of much domestic education for girls, both theoretical and narrative texts also draw attention to the shortcomings of many schools. For example, an anonymous reviewer⁵⁶ of Broadhurst's *A Word in Favour of Female Schools* dismisses her arguments as 'very partial' (466), reiterating the eighteenth-century fears of 'contagion' and the cultivation of 'jealousy and envy' in a competitive environment (468), and asserting confidently, 'Home is the best place' (466). The writer is also dismissive of the 'showy accomplishments' which dominated the curriculum in many establishments. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Schools Inquiry Commissioners found that this was still the case forty years later, commenting that 'young ladies [...] merely nibble at the bones and sinew of sound instruction in the moments which can be spared from the piano and the easel' (SIC vol. VII: 208).

The issue of the curriculum is addressed in a number of stories, and is the subject of a later chapter. However, it is the perceived tendency of many schools to undermine the moral and

⁵⁵ Similarly, Ethel May, the central protagonist in Charlotte Yonge's *The Daisy Chain* (1856), is portrayed as academically able. However, she is persuaded to give up studying Greek alongside her older brother Norman, allowing him to 'pass beyond' her so that she can concentrate on becoming 'a useful, steady daughter and sister at home [...] and a comfort to papa' (181).

⁵⁶ See 'On Female Schools', *Christian Remembrancer* 8.8 (August 1826): 466.

spiritual teaching received at home which is the particular focus of a number of fictional texts for girls. For instance, in Anna Buckland's *Lily and Nannie at School* (1868), the two protagonists are sent away to school when their mother has to give up teaching them because of her pregnancy. There, they are shocked to find that most of the other pupils are thoughtless and disobedient, and affect 'mincing, missy ways' (1868:109). Consequently they are engaged in a constant struggle to be faithful to the values instilled in them by their parents. The 'home-like' characteristics that Mrs Stafford claims for her school are exposed as mere pretence. Finally the school undermines Nannie's health. Following her sister's death from gastric fever, Lily does not return there, for 'it would have been almost too great a trial' (221), but resumes home lessons alongside a friend who is also removed from the school. Buckland's mistrust of school for girls is made clear by her depiction of Mrs Stafford's establishment as morally corrupting, and underlined by her uncritical acceptance of the public education given to the boys of the family who write to their sisters describing the 'jolly fun' (14) they enjoy at their own school. Significantly in this text, Buckland uses Arnold's image of the school as a wilderness. However, for her female protagonists it is somewhere to be shunned, rather than a place where they might learn to withstand temptation. Confrontation with evil, shown in many boys' stories as a means of equipping male characters for the challenges of adulthood, is represented here as inevitably harmful to girls.

It is clear from these examples that in a period when both home and school played a part in the education of most middle-class children, fiction makes a significant contribution to the discussion of the merits and shortcomings of each, reflecting many of the issues highlighted in non-literary works. The texts cited so far tend to contrast home and school in order to commend the virtues of one form of provision, or to draw attention to the shortcomings of the other. However, others take the debate further, interrogating the boundaries between home and

school in order to reveal congruence as well as conflict. In the rest of this chapter, I want to go on to consider the work of two writers who examine the complexities and ambiguities of the relationship between public and private educational space in both fictional and theoretical texts. Martineau's story *The Crofton Boys* (1841) focuses principally on the schooling of a young boy, first at home, and then at boarding school, and explores issues discussed in her treatise *Household Education* (1849). Sewell's novel *Laneton Parsonage* (1846-9) deals with the experiences of three very different female protagonists who are also sent away to school after being taught at home, and illustrates the theories of education set out in her *Principles of Education* (1865). Because New Historicist inquiry assumes, in Veenser's terms, 'that literary and non-literary "texts" circulate inseparably' (1989: xi), it is particularly pertinent to a consideration of work by these two writers who, unusually, address their educational concerns in fiction as well as in non-fictional discourses. By placing the stories firmly within the context of the discussion of educational principle and practice, I intend to demonstrate how, on the one hand, the narratives are shaped by prevailing ideas concerning the relationship between domestic and institutional schooling, and how, on the other, they serve both to sanction and to contest those ideas.

Harriet Martineau's *The Crofton Boys* and the convergence of home and school

Martineau's theoretical depiction of the home as school

Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) was one of the most versatile and prolific writers of the nineteenth century. In a career spanning over fifty years, she published an autobiography and various memoirs, travel and guide books, works on politics, economics, history and social affairs, and a translation of Comte's *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (1853). She was also an indefatigable journalist, regularly contributing articles on topics of public concern to *The*

Daily News and several leading periodicals. In addition, she used fiction as a medium for the further exploration of many of the issues she addressed in her social and political writing, producing two novels and a number of shorter tales, including several for children. Of particular significance for this study is her school story *The Crofton Boys* and its relationship to her non-fictional writings.

Education was a topic to which Martineau returned repeatedly in her journalism, stressing its essential place in the building of a more egalitarian and cohesive society, and calling for reform of the provision available to all classes, and to both boys and girls. In arguing consistently for the expansion of educational opportunities for women, she was considerably in advance of her time.⁵⁷ However, while recognising the crucial role of institutional schooling in national life, Martineau also emphasised the vital contribution of the home to the training of the individual child. She examines this in detail in *Household Education*, a volume addressed specifically to parents. Characterising '[e]very home [as] a school for young and old together' (7), she sets out to show how family life has the potential to 'bring out and strengthen and exercise all the powers given to every human being' (13). These 'powers', which are shared equally by both sexes, include such moral attributes as hope, love, truthfulness and conscientiousness, as well as the capacity for feeling, reasoning and imagination. In her representation of the home as a 'school', Martineau stresses its significance as the proper site for early education, and for lifelong spiritual, moral, social and emotional formation. She draws particular attention to the contrast between the crowded environment of the infant school, where 'play occasions an uproar' (138), and the 'quietness, retirement, and repose' of

⁵⁷ See in particular Harriet Martineau. 'Female Education'. *Monthly Repository* 18 (1823): 77-81, and 'Middle-Class Education in England: Girls'. *Cornhill Magazine* 10:59 (November 1864): 549-63.

the home, where each child can be closely supervised and given individual care. Parents are ideally placed to provide this training because they act out of love for the child, and understand its unique character.

At school, everything is done by rule; by a law which was made without a view to any particular child, and which governs all alike: whereas, at home, the government is not one of law [...], but of love [...]. There is no occasion to point out here how great are the moral advantages of a good home in comparison with the best of schools. (122)

However, as indicated above, Martineau never opposes institutional schooling out of hand. In *Household Education*, she freely acknowledges the ability of a good school to build on home training to develop the ‘intellectual faculties’ of conception, reason and imagination (121). She asserts:

I can think that no children, in any rank of life, can acquire so much book-knowledge at a good school, or have their intellectual faculties so well roused and trained. I have never seen an instance of such high attainment in languages, mathematics, history, or philosophy in young people taught at home, [...] as in those who have been taught in a good school. (121-2)

At the same time, she is aware of ‘schools so bad that children learn little in them’ (122).

Echoing Thomas Arnold, she singles out for criticism the public schools ‘where [boys] must run tremendous risks to both morals and intellect’ (122). For Martineau, as for Arnold, the solution to the dilemma of finding a means by which older children could realise ‘the most complete development of all the faculties’ (159) was to be found in a combination of home and school. Later, she explicitly promoted the ideal of secondary day schools which would enable children to obtain the benefits of an academic education, while still receiving moral and spiritual training at home, asserting that ‘[a] combination of the domestic and academical life is a very high privilege indeed’ (1864: 564-5).

The home as a site for early education in *The Crofton Boys*

In *Household Education*, Martineau makes an important contribution to contemporary debate about the significance of the home as an educational site, emphasising particularly the role of parents in the schooling of younger children. In *The Crofton Boys* (1841), which predates its completion by several years,⁵⁸ she uses a fictional narrative to examine this issue in some depth, depicting the strengths and limitations of her protagonist's early education at home before going on to explore the impact of his subsequent experience of formal schooling. In tracing the development of the character of young Hugh Proctor over the eight or nine years of his education, Martineau demonstrates the influence of both home and school upon his spiritual, moral, social and intellectual growth, and reveals points of both convergence and conflict between the two sites.

The early part of the story is set in the London home of the Proctor family where the two girls and younger boys receive their formal lessons from a governess. Their mother helps to reinforce her teaching, and at the same time oversees their religious and moral instruction. She thus personifies the model educator described in *Household Education*. This régime suits the girls well. They work hard, doing sums and reading French books 'just for pleasure' (1841: 7). In contrast, eight-year-old Hugh is lazy and uncooperative and all attempts to teach him prove ineffective. Obsessed by two burning ambitions, to 'go quite round the world, like Captain

⁵⁸ Fourteen articles published in Vols 2-5 of *The People's Journal* (1847-8) formed the basis of *Household Education*, which Martineau completed in 1848 and which was published by E. Moxon in 1849.

Cook' (103) and, more immediately, to join his older brother Phil at Mr Tooke's academy at Crofton, his mind is filled with fantasies of school life and voyages of adventure, and he progresses neither mentally nor morally at home. Thus Martineau uses her depiction of the home schoolroom to illustrate its limitations as well as its strengths. His mother's exhortations and the exertions of his governess make little lasting impression, and Hugh persists in believing that because Phil has no problems with his school work, his lessons will be done 'as a matter of course' (34) once he is at Crofton. Eventually, his parents accept that their attempts to educate Hugh at home have failed, and decide to send him to school early, not to indulge his wishes, but so that he may learn 'resolution' (43) and the habit of hard work from 'the example of other boys' (43). At the same time, his mother warns him that school life will be much harder than he expects, setting the scene for the depiction of a vivid contrast between the worlds of home and school.

School as a site for moral and intellectual formation

Once at Crofton, Hugh quickly realises the truth of his mother's warning and wishes himself back with his governess. On his first evening, 'he felt how very unlike home it was, and how rough everyone seemed' (81). Dubbed a 'Betty' because his long hair is 'too like a girl's' (100), and told to 'move off' (94) when he proves a liability at games, he finds that he is ill-equipped to become a 'Crofton boy'. His habits of idleness make learning so arduous that 'he would begin saying his syntax in the middle of the night [...]; and once he walked in his sleep as far as the head of the stairs' (116). In this new environment, adults are remote figures, and Hugh has to rely on his own wits and the goodwill of older boys to guide him.

Nevertheless, school is shown to have advantages. In particular, London-bred Hugh revels in the playground and the countryside beyond: ‘he was in the open air, with [...] green fields stretching away [...] He] screamed for pleasure’ (92). This emphasis on the importance to growing children of physical exercise and contact with the natural world occurs also in *Household Education* and in Martineau’s *Autobiography*,⁵⁹ echoing Rousseau’s notion of nature as teacher.⁶⁰ As Elizabeth Gargano points out, ‘Hugh learns his most important lessons in discipline and self-control on the playground’ (101).⁶¹ Thus he soon proves ‘quick and clever’ (178) at games, and this enables him to make friends. Through working with the conscientious Dale, he begins to master Latin. ‘When he could learn a lesson in ten minutes, and say it in one [...] and saw the meaning of a rule of syntax [...] he felt himself really a Crofton boy, and his heart grew light within him’ (157).

As Hugh learns to tackle the challenges posed by Crofton, Martineau shows him drawing on two main resources. The first he discovers within the school itself, when Firth, a senior boy, befriends him and advises him to cut his hair and show some ‘spirit’ (99) at games. When Hugh is missing his mother and complains that no-one at school cares for him, Firth makes it clear that boys do not discuss feelings openly, explaining, ‘To prosper at Crofton, you must put off home’ (164). Nevertheless, he helps Hugh write his letters to his family, and allows that it is perfectly acceptable to talk about his mother and sisters privately, with ‘confidential

⁵⁹ This is discussed in the chapter ‘Care of the Frame’ (pp. 39-45) in *Household Education*, and reflected in her subsequent endorsement of the capacity of holidays in the country to serve ‘as a prodigious stimulus to the intellect’ (205). In her *Autobiography*, she tells how, as a child, she ‘obtained many new ideas and, and much development’ from a seaside holiday (vol. I: 60). The inspiration she continued to derive from nature throughout her life is expressed, for example, in her account of her move to Ambleside in 1845 (vol. II: 219-20).

⁶⁰ See for example J.J. Rousseau, *Émile* [1762] (London: Dent, 1911): 84.

⁶¹ Gargano also notes that the representation of outdoor space as ‘the site where real education begins’ (2008: 99) is a recurring theme in nineteenth-century school fiction. This point will be developed in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

friends' (164). In her delineation of this relationship, as well as in her portrayal of his friendship with the younger Dale, Martineau affirms the capacity of the boarding school to enable pupils to learn through peer emulation and competition, a view advanced by such earlier educationists as Knox, as well as by her contemporary Frances Broadhurst (1826). She indicates, too, that school provides a necessary means of enabling a boy to move from the protective environment of home to the wider world where he will have to stand on his own feet and fight his own battles. When Hugh complains to Firth that he has been punished unfairly, his friend replies, '[A] school is to boys what the world is when they become men. They must manage their own affairs among themselves' (167). Thus Hugh resigns himself 'as men have to do in the world, to be misunderstood, [...] to be blamed when he felt himself the injured one' (170).

Hugh's other source of strength is the advice he has received from his mother, particularly her spiritual teaching. As already indicated, the representation of the home as the principal site of moral and religious formation is central to Martineau's argument in *Household Education*. In this, she is in agreement both with other theorists, such as Arnold, and with other writers of school fiction, including May and Buckland, who also stress the significance of domestic education in inculcating spiritual and moral values. Before he leaves home, Mrs Proctor assures Hugh of God's help when school life proves difficult: '[R]emember, when a child makes God his friend, God puts into the youngest and weakest the spirit of a man' (49). Although he has previously paid little attention to her teaching, Hugh remembers his mother's words on his first night at school, when he is overcome with disappointment and homesickness. 'It was a happy thought [...] that his very best Friend was with him still, and that he might speak to Him at any time' (81). Later, he speaks to Firth of his conviction, and the older boy expresses explicit approval of Mrs Proctor's teaching. While in much

contemporary writing the values of school are shown as undermining or conflicting with those of home, Martineau depicts them here as converging in an important respect.

Through his discussions with Firth and through reading his mother's letters and remembering her advice, Hugh gradually acquires the determination he initially lacks. His new-found resolution stands him in good stead when he faces his greatest trial, the amputation of his foot following a playground accident. 'In the very middle of it all, Hugh looked up in his uncle's face, and said, "Never mind, uncle! I can bear it." He did bear it finely' (192).

While revealing the efficacy of the lessons Hugh has learnt in his first term at Crofton, his accident also exposes the limitations of the school environment. His foot is crushed by a coping stone dislodged during a boisterous game which is not supervised by adults, and Firth carries him into the house. There, the distraught Mr Tooke gives him his own bed and stays with him all day, but his uncle arrives to sit with him throughout the operation. Afterwards his mother and sister come to provide the constant attention and guidance which are beyond the resources of the school to provide. Their care ensures that Hugh begins to adjust emotionally as well as physically to his disability, and is eventually able to return to school.

The complementary roles of home and school in the education of a boy

The infiltration of Crofton by members of Hugh's family to care for him after the accident and his removal to his uncle's house for his convalescence have been interpreted by some commentators as a device for undermining the principles and practice of formal schooling and for endorsing the home as the ideal educational space. Holt describes the book as 'a tale of home values triumphing over school' (2008: 42). Gargano identifies 'a covert rhetoric of domesticity [which] orchestrates a redemptive counterpoint to institutional agendas', more

subtly attributing Hugh's reformation to 'an uneasy balance of domestic instruction and immersion in the wildness of boy-nature' (2008: 107).

However, as already shown in Martineau's treatment of Hugh's spiritual and moral education, the boundaries between home and school are frequently blurred, and sometimes converge in this novel. One example of the congruence of values can be seen in the attitude to tale-bearing. Hugh learns early on that 'tell-tales' are not tolerated at Crofton. After his accident, he refuses to name the boy who caused it, and is supported in his decision by Firth, Mr Tooke, and also by his mother. When he almost betrays his secret, she gives him sound advice on how to deal with such temptation in the future.

Home and school are also portrayed as contributing equally to Hugh's recovery. In the period immediately following his accident, his mother's care and her assurances of the strength to be derived from suffering help him as he struggles to come to terms with his pain. However, once his foot has healed, he has to face the long-term implications of his injury. The influence of his schoolfellows is crucial to this process. His initial tendency to play on his disability and seek sympathy and advantages for himself alienates some of the boys, but Holt, a boy he had once despised, remains loyal, coming to understand Hugh better than his own family. When spending the holidays with the Proctors, Holt insists on treating him as he is treated at school. He shows Hugh's sisters the importance of encouraging him to be independent, rather than waiting on him, and of never humouring him by allowing his faults to go unchecked. This friendship proves essential to Hugh's capacity to bear his injury in the long term, and to persevere with his school work. While Crofton remains a place where he must learn 'hard lessons' (170), the strength of character he eventually achieves with Holt's help gain him the promise of a career in the Indian Civil Service, and the realisation of his old dream to travel.

Martineau's representation of female education in *The Crofton Boys*

The Crofton Boys focuses on a male protagonist, illustrating Martineau's belief that home and school have the capacity to complement one another as sites for the education of boys. In *Household Education* she makes it clear that her philosophy applies to both sexes. While she advocates the training of girls in domestic skills, she insists that their intellectual and moral capacities are equal to those of boys. Thus she argues that boys and girls should be educated together, first in the home, and later in day schools. However, her depiction of female education in *The Crofton Boys* is much less radical. Agnes and Jane Proctor remain at home while their brothers go to school. Although they enjoy their lessons, much of their time is occupied with household tasks. Martineau's implicit approval in this text of a fairly narrow domestic education for girls contradicts her support for their formal academic schooling in her theoretical work. In her study of Martineau, Caroline Roberts describes *The Crofton Boys* as Martineau's 'most conventional' work, suggesting that the book is 'an apology for her earlier contradiction of social norms' (2002: 119-20). However, Martineau's continuing support for the expansion of formal educational opportunities for both girls and boys demonstrates that she never abandoned her fundamental belief in the equality of the sexes. For example, in her two articles entitled 'Middle-Class Education', published in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1864 in response to the *Report of the Public Schools Commission*, she wholeheartedly advocates the expansion of academic schools for both boys and girls. It seems more likely that, as Valerie Pichanick has speculated, she wrote conventionally about girls' education because she was dependent upon income from her books,⁶² and needed 'to write in a genre which anxious

⁶² It is significant that Martineau's four children's stories which appeared in 1841 were written during a period of illness from which she did not expect to recover. Believing that *The Crofton Boys* would prove her last published work, she comments in her *Autobiography*: 'When it was sealed up and sent, I stretched myself on my sofa, and said to myself, with entire sincerity, that my career as an author was closed' (vol. II: 169).

parents of young readers would find acceptable' (1980: 171). Whatever her reasons for the avoidance of controversy in this book, it would appear that Martineau was inhibited by the perceived constraints of writing for a child audience, and deliberately adopted a more conservative stance on the education of girls than that taken in her theoretical writings.

Elizabeth Sewell: theorist and practitioner

Unlike Martineau, Elizabeth Missing Sewell (1815-1906) was also a practitioner. Her thirteen novels and her treatise, *Principles of Education*, draw extensively upon her long experience as a teacher. Her career began in 1830, when she and her eldest sister Ellen left their Bath boarding school to assume responsibility for their younger siblings' education at home. Subsequently, they were obliged to undertake the upbringing of five nephews and nieces. By 1852, financial necessity led them to take additional pupils. Thus their home, Ashcliff at Bonchurch in the Isle of Wight, 'became more distinctly a house for education' (1907: 141), and continued as such until 1890. Sewell's strong commitment to education also led to her involvement in the establishment of a National School in the parish of Bonchurch in 1848. Later, in 1866, she was instrumental in founding St Boniface, a day and boarding school for middle-class girls which was large by contemporary standards.⁶³ There she was actively involved as a visiting teacher and member of the governing council until 1898.

At the beginning of *Principles of Education*, Sewell makes it clear that her ideas are rooted in this long practice, 'the result not of theory, but of experience' (1865: iii). That experience, allied to her firmly-held Christian beliefs, led her, like Martineau, to place particular emphasis

⁶³ In its heyday, St Boniface catered for sixty girls, compared with the seven usually accommodated at Ashcliff. See Sewell's *Autobiography* (1907): 218, and Mary Fraser, *A Diplomatist's Wife in Many Lands* (2 vols 1910): Section 15.

upon the uniqueness of each human being, and the role of education in developing all the abilities inherent in each child. She defines education as ‘the carrying out of God’s will for the individual’, asserting, ‘the direction in which we are to work is pointed out to us by the peculiar endowments of character and of intellect with which every person is gifted’ (25). Consequently Sewell is careful to distinguish between ‘principles’, which constitute the underlying rationale for education, and ‘systems’, which are the strategies for achieving specific educational goals. Because systems ‘act without regard to the varieties of character’ (6), she argues that, ultimately, they are ineffectual.

The religious purpose of education, reflected in concern for the individual, also leads Sewell to attach most importance to spiritual and moral education. She makes it clear that such education begins in the home, where the beginnings of religious understanding are generated and nurtured through the child’s relationship with its mother. Like Martineau, Sewell argues that to be effective, that relationship must be based upon love, which she defines as ‘the foundation stone of all right influence and guidance’ (65). The concept of ‘influence’ is central to her thought. While she too speaks of ‘home life [...] as a school’ (173), she also likens it to the innermost of a series of interlocking moulds in which the child’s character is formed ‘almost unconsciously [...] through the medium of general conversation, [...] to say nothing of that most important of all educational influences, example’ (120).

Principles is addressed primarily to mothers educating their daughters at home. However, Sewell also devotes several chapters to the issue of formal schooling for girls, which she increasingly came to see as essential if women were to be prepared to earn their own living. As noted in Chapter 1, it is ‘the well-ordered household’ (395) which provides the model for the ideal girls’ school. Only in such an establishment could girls receive the individual attention to their moral well-being which Sewell sees as a vital ‘means of influence’ (395).

Ashcliff saw the practical working out of this ideal. Indeed, Mary Fraser, a former pupil, recalled that the Sewell sisters 'were very indignant if "Ashcliff" was called a school. It was a family home' (1910: 121).⁶⁴

Domestic education in *Laneton Parsonage*

Sewell's thirteen novels are all broadly concerned with the upbringing of children in both domestic and school settings. Of these, *Laneton Parsonage* (1846-1848) is the only text written specifically for a child audience, but it is also the one in which she addresses most directly the question of how girls are best to be educated. Whereas *The Crofton Boys* focuses in depth on the impact of educational experience upon the growth of a single male character, *Laneton Parsonage* is a much longer and more intricate narrative which explores the influences of home and school on three contrasting female protagonists as they grow up. As in her theoretical work, the girls' moral and spiritual development is Sewell's main concern in this book.⁶⁵ Each chapter depicts the girls discovering the meaning of a particular aspect of Christian belief through experience and applying it to their own lives. The novel culminates in their confirmation and transition to mature adulthood. One of Sewell's stated aims in this book is 'to illustrate the truths of the Christian faith as practised in English homes' (1907: 225), but as well as being a medium for the religious instruction of her readers, the book is an

⁶⁴ In her memoir, *A Diplomatist's Wife in Many Lands* (1910), Fraser describes how the sisters governed by example and by winning the love and respect of the girls. 'We found full reward or retribution in Miss Ellen's smile or frown' (120), she wrote, going on to describe how Sewell herself oversaw their spiritual and moral education. 'Miss Elizabeth [...] looked after our tiresome little characters, watched them with such wisdom and affection that she held all our hearts in her hand' (120).

⁶⁵ The book was originally published in three parts between 1846 and 1849 with the subtitle *A Tale for Children on the Practical Use of a Portion of the Church Catechism*. A new edition in one volume was published in 1886, subtitled simply *A Tale for Children* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1886). That is the edition referred to throughout this thesis.

exploration of the whole process of education. Sewell shows how multiple influences contribute to this process, operating in what Dinah Birch has described as ‘fluid and dynamic reciprocity’ (2008: 104). These influences include parents, teachers and peers, and are mediated through both domestic and institutional educational settings which work sometimes in harmony, and sometimes in conflict with one another. Because her protagonists are unlike in temperament and have contrasting qualities and weaknesses, they respond very differently to these influences. The juxtaposition of home and school in this novel is thus used skillfully, and at times controversially, to demonstrate the unpredictable, even hazardous nature of educational endeavour.

When the story opens, ten-year-old twins Ruth and Madeline Clifford are being taught at home by their mother and their father, who is the Rector of Laneton, a west-country fishing village. Their orphaned friend, Alice Lennox, has recently been adopted by a neighbour, Lady Catharine Hyde, and is also being educated at home. The girls’ differing characters are drawn clearly from the outset. Ruth is described as ‘thoughtful’, ‘careful and attentive’ (4), but also ‘very proud’ (4). In contrast, Madeline is cheerful and lively, but ‘hasty and thoughtless’ (4) too. Her chief weakness is a ‘taste for finery’ (43). Alice is ‘by nature proud, wilful and insincere; but [...] also warm-hearted and energetic’ (150). Following the death of both her parents, she is easily influenced by anyone who shows her affection. The home training of all three focuses on the cultivation of their virtues and the eradication of their besetting faults.

In their teaching of Ruth and Madeline, the Cliffords are portrayed as ideal parents who exemplify the principles of education outlined by Sewell in her theory. There, obedience on the part of the child, and parental ‘love exhibited in tenderness and sympathy’ (65) are identified as essential to the work of education. In the novel, she emphasises that, while insisting on absolute obedience, Mr and Mrs Clifford enjoy the love and trust of both girls.

Their mother is ‘anxious to be the friend of her children’ (427), while their father exhibits the empathy Sewell values so highly, demonstrating ‘a sort of power of guessing what was in his little girl’s mind before she had attempted to tell him’ (12). Mr Clifford also draws on everyday events to convey moral and religious teaching, illustrating a key component of Sewell’s educational philosophy: ‘The experience of a child is a guide for the instruction of a child’ (1865: 60). Thus he uses the twins’ curiosity about Alice’s status as an adopted child, and Lady Catharine’s heir, to explain the abstract Christian belief that in baptism they have ‘been made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven [...], and the children of God’ (18).

While Sewell’s portrayal of domestic schooling at the Parsonage epitomises and affirms many of her theoretical tenets, her depiction of Alice’s upbringing at the Manor provides a different perspective on home education, exposing the difficulties that can arise if it is not based on mutual love and trust. Lady Catharine undertakes Alice’s education herself, but although she gives her every material advantage, she is unable to show the love she genuinely has for the child, or to empathise with her feelings. Her methods consist chiefly of ‘advice’, an approach which Sewell considered ‘the least efficacious of all the means we are called upon to adopt’ (1865: 120). She imposes many rules upon Alice, exacting compliance from fear rather than love, and thus typifies the unsympathetic and ineffectual tutor censured in *Principles*.

As a result, Alice grows deceitful and defiant, and Lady Catharine resolves to send her to Mrs Carter’s school at Chiswick where she believes she will be subjected ‘to another and a stricter care’ (112). Mr Clifford tries to dissuade her. ‘He believed that, to allow Alice to remain at home, and to treat her with gentleness and firmness, would be more likely to strengthen her principles, and enable her to resist future temptations, than to send her amongst strange companions at school’ (135). In warning Lady Catharine that Alice ‘might run great risk of evil’ if sent away, he expresses the perceived dangers of school for girls which had

been highlighted in the work of earlier theorists such as Knox and Chirol, and which continued to preoccupy commentators on female education into the second half of the century. Sewell herself returns to this issue in *Principles*, where she criticises the ‘school-girl tone’ which infects pupils in many schools, and which is characterised above all by deceitfulness. She stresses: ‘Deceit is not taught, but it is imbibed: it exists in the atmosphere’ (1865: 393). Even in a school as well regulated as Mrs Carter’s, she implies that girls may lead one another astray. However, Lady Catharine ignores Mr Clifford’s arguments, and commits Alice to Mrs Carter’s care.

Although Mr Clifford disapproves of Lady Catharine’s plans for Alice, he decides to send Ruth and Madeline to the same school when Mrs Clifford’s invalid mother comes to live at the Parsonage, and she no longer has time to teach the girls. Nevertheless, he makes it clear that he is taking this step reluctantly, believing that for Madeline, as for Alice, a home education is the most appropriate. He reiterates the fear of schools, warning both girls that ‘school is a very different place from home. There are many more temptations and trials, and you will have more companions to lead you into mischief’ (67). He can only trust that their early training and Mrs Carter’s care will keep them ‘in the straight and narrow way of goodness’ (136).

Tensions between the values of home and school

Despite these warnings, all three girls find school a happy place. Mrs Carter’s pupils ‘are in a manner her children’ (235) and Alice in particular appreciates her warmth. Madeline and Ruth find that her teaching and values are totally consistent with those of home. Mrs Clifford trusts her absolutely. ‘I know that Mrs Carter is extremely particular, quite as much so as I should be’, (265) she writes to Ruth. However, as Mrs Clifford also warns, there is a danger that some pupils will abandon her high standards when they are unsupervised. This indeed has happened

in the school. An 'idle set', led by Clara Manners and Florence Trevelyan, typifies the 'school-girl tone'. Their most serious act of deceit is to form a club for reading forbidden novels⁶⁶ obtained for them by Justine Le Vergnier, daughter of the French master and a frequent visitor to the school. In *Principles*, Sewell explicitly warns against 'books in which the fundamental principles of morality are utterly set aside' (288), and here she exploits contemporary perceptions of the French as morally decadent to emphasise the club's potential to corrupt.⁶⁷ It encapsulates the dangers implicit in school life about which the girls have been warned, tempting each of them to abandon the values instilled at home, and to succumb to her own most serious weakness.

Madeline is initially the most thoughtless and immature of the three, but she responds to Mrs Carter's influence and makes a determined attempt to improve. The discipline she subjects herself to bears fruit. When she accidentally finds one of the forbidden books, she resists both the temptation to read it, and Justine's offer of a brooch in exchange for a promise not to tell what she has seen. Her refusal of the bribe is explicitly linked by Sewell to 'her earnest endeavour to strive against her faults' (271), especially her desire for pretty things. This in its

⁶⁶ The forbidden book is a common motif in girls' school stories, serving both as a test of honour and obedience, and as a threat to sexual innocence. Among nineteenth century texts it is a feature of Worboise's *Grace Hamilton's School Days* (1856), Buckland's *Lily and Nannie at School* (1868) and Paull's *Mabel's School Days* (1872). It continues to occur well into the twentieth century in such novels as Brent-Dyer's *The Wrong Chalet School* (1952) and Forest's *The Cricket Term* (1974). In relation to this, it is interesting to note that Mary Fraser's only unhappy memory of her schooldays at Ashcliff concerns unsuitable reading. Describing Miss Elizabeth's reading aloud of *Cranford* to the girls, Fraser tells how she stopped abruptly when she reached the passage where Miss Matty recalls Peter's youthful indiscretions, notably the incident where he shocked the old ladies by pretending that his unmarried sister had returned to Cranford with a baby after a period of absence (Gaskell 1980: 50-53). When one of the girls retrieved the book and read the forbidden passage, her parents were asked to remove her from the school.

⁶⁷ For example, in her journal *The Guardian of Education* (1802-6) Sarah Trimmer opposes the teaching of French to English children on the grounds that it 'has been the occasion of incalculable mischief, by opening a passage for that torrent of infidelity and immorality which has been poured upon the nation from the continent through the channel of French books'. (Vol 2, 1803: 406).

turn is shown to be rooted in the training she has been given from earliest childhood, particularly in the practice of prayer which she maintains even in surroundings which afford her little privacy or quiet.

Ruth has undergone the same training both at home and at school. However, unlike Madeline, she remains oblivious to her faults. Proud to the point of self-righteousness, she is complacent in the face of temptation. When Mrs Clifford writes to warn the girls against ‘foolish talking’ (264) and reading unsuitable books, Ruth dismisses her mother’s advice as unnecessary: ‘We need not do it; nothing is easier’ (267). However, when she sees Florence taking a book upstairs, she guesses her secret, searches the bedroom and finds the illicit novel.

Ruth opened it at the title page [...]. She looked at one or two of the pages, merely from curiosity, to see what the story was like. [...] She read down a page [...] and she turned over the leaf. [...] When the shadows of evening had deepened; when it was dark, so that she could scarcely tell the words, Ruth laid down the book, and asked herself what she had done. (274-5)

Fearing detection, she hides the book where it is soon discovered by a member of staff. When Mrs Carter asks all those implicated to own up, Ruth cannot bring herself to confess because of her unwillingness to lose what she most values, ‘the respect and admiration of her fellow creatures’ (190). The knowledge that she has betrayed her parents’ teaching and behaved as dishonorably as the school-fellows she scorns results in such mental turmoil that Ruth becomes ill, experiencing violent headaches and loss of appetite. Her guilt is compounded when she is elected school ‘judge’, or head girl, and she receives the news of her once-coveted appointment with ‘a ghastly smile’ (326). The situation is only resolved when Mr Clifford arrives to take the girls home for the holidays. At the sight of him, Ruth breaks down and confesses what she has done before the whole school, and he is forced into making a quick decision about her future.

Whatever a school-life might be for others, even for Madeline, it was evidently undesirable

for Ruth. The pride of her character needed a constant guard, such a guard as Mrs Carter, with all her endeavours would scarcely be able to keep. [...] It was decided [...] that the departure of both should be final. (330)

While confronting the dilemmas inherent in school life is shown to strengthen Madeline, and harm Ruth, it confuses Alice. Always ‘a person of impulse’ (204), she is easily influenced for both good and ill. At times she tries hard to follow the advice she receives in letters from Lady Catharine, endeavouring to ‘become a different person, steadily good, instead of being so only at intervals’ (206). Yet overtures of friendship from Clara and Justine set her back, and when she first chances upon the novel reading, she willingly joins in. Later she withdraws, refusing to pay the subscription Clara demands. Nevertheless, she has the courage to own up when Mrs Carter instigates her investigations. Slowly, school is shown to be benefitting her. ‘[S]he has begun to resist temptation, to act upon principle’ (330), Mrs Carter tells Mr Clifford when it is decided that Alice will remain another year at school. Fundamental to her improvement is the care she has received from Mrs Carter. School is thus depicted as providing a surrogate family for Alice, and when she finally returns to the Manor, it ‘scarcely seemed to her like home’ (339).

Laneton Parsonage and Sewell’s philosophy of education

Sarah Frerichs (2008)⁶⁸ argues that Mr Clifford’s removal of his daughters from school represents Sewell’s affirmation of the moral advantages of domestic education, and her rejection of formal schooling. She suggests: ‘Laneton Parsonage: Home vs. Boarding School

⁶⁸ References are to the 2008 web version of Frerichs’ PhD Thesis, ‘Elizabeth Missing Sewell: A Minor Novelist’s Search for the *Via Media* in the Education of Women in the Victorian Era’, Brown University, 1974.

would have been an equally descriptive title' for the novel. Certainly Sewell's depiction of the relationship between home and school is more ambiguous than Martineau's. Whereas in charting Hugh's progress, Martineau constantly explores the boundaries between home and school to demonstrate how both come together to provide the space necessary for learning, Sewell portrays conflict as well as convergence. She is at pains to show how life in a boarding school, even a small one modelled on the ideal of a Christian family, exposes her protagonists to the corrupting influence of pupils whose values are in direct conflict with those of their parents. However, when Mrs Clifford warns her daughters against 'evil conversation', she emphasises, 'No one can keep you from it but yourselves' (265). Faced with the temptation to follow the example set by their more dubious school-fellows, Madeline and Ruth make quite different moral choices. Madeline remains true to her parents' teaching, which is reinforced by Mrs Carter. Ruth forgets it, but her lapse is attributed to her own pride and complacency rather than to the influence of her companions. Her offence is represented as being 'against her mother's warnings [and] against Mrs Carter's rules' (277), reaffirming that at one level, there is perfect congruence between the values of both. Thus school is not portrayed as damaging of itself. Like Madeline, Alice also becomes a stronger character at school. Sewell attributes her growth to the affection shown to her by Mrs Carter, which compensates for the severity with which she has been treated at home. It is significant that Alice lapses and yields again to Florence's influence when she returns to the Manor.

Conclusions

Central to the fictional and non-fictional writings of both Sewell and Martineau is one of the principal dilemmas facing nineteenth-century educationalists: how to reconcile provision for children's moral and spiritual development with the need to equip them with the knowledge

and skills increasingly seen as essential for a productive adult life. Both Sewell and Martineau engage with this issue by focusing on the competing claims of home and school as sites for education.

In their critical writings, both writers give support to the contemporary view of the home as the proper setting for moral and religious training and for the schooling of young children, and emphasise the crucial contribution of parents to these aspects of education. At the same time, they acknowledge the problems that may arise if parents lack the skill or empathy to teach their children effectively. Their fiction similarly reflects the ideals underlying home education, but it is also used to expose some of the limitations of even the best domestic schooling. It proves ineffectual in the case of Alice Lennox as well as Hugh Proctor, while at Laneton Parsonage it is shown to be unsustainable in the face of family crisis. These factors drive the plot in both novels, with the move to school precipitated by the breakdown of home education in each case.

Although their theoretical works focus principally on education in the home, neither Martineau nor Sewell rejects formal schooling. Martineau advocated a system in which home and school were complementary. In *The Crofton Boys* she demonstrates how Hugh's early training and the continuing support of his family enable him to benefit from an experience of school which is challenging in the extreme, and to prepare academically for his chosen career. However, while her fiction and non-fiction converge in their representation of a boy's education, they conflict in their treatment of girls' schooling. Controversially for her time, Martineau makes a strong case in *Household Education* for the same opportunities to be made available to both boys and girls. Yet in her novel, she complies with the prevailing view which favoured domestic education for girls. As I have suggested above, it is likely that financial considerations persuaded her to represent female education in terms that would ensure the

commercial viability of the book. Nevertheless, the divergence of views in her fiction and non-fiction does indicate that Martineau did not regard a children's book as an appropriate vehicle for questioning accepted norms.

Sewell's theoretical views on the education of girls were much less radical than Martineau's. While she recognised the advantages of formal schooling, she emphasises in *Principles* that this should be conducted on a domestic model. However, a reading of this text alongside *Laneton Parsonage* shows how she uses fiction both to sanction and contest this ideal, indicating its potential to endorse as well as to undermine home teaching. In her characterisation of Alice Lennox, she also demonstrates how school may compensate for the failure of domestic education. The structuring of the plot of *Laneton Parsonage* around the experiences of three contrasting characters is particularly effective in allowing her to explore the contributions of home and school to the teaching of each girl. The different perspectives expose strengths and weaknesses in both approaches to education, enabling Sewell to elucidate her conviction that the needs and temperament of the child should determine the nature of educational provision. In her theoretical work she is critical of 'systems' which 'act without regard to the varieties of character' (1865: 1.6), and in *Laneton Parsonage* she shows how a single system, whether of domestic or of institutional education, cannot meet the needs of every child. Thus she uses fiction to indicate the difficulties surrounding decisions about girls' schooling, and the risks inherent in any choice.

The reading of *The Crofton Boys* and *Laneton Parsonage* alongside their authors' non-literary educational writings reveals both paradoxes and parallels. Sewell consistently uses narrative to advance models of good practice, and, more subtly, to question aspects of both public and private provision, so demonstrating the power of fiction to provide a considered critique of current opinion. Martineau exploits the school story very skilfully to elaborate on

her theoretical view of education as a complex process to which, ideally, both home and school contribute. However, in restricting its application to the education of a boy, and adhering to current assumptions about girls' schooling, she contradicts her own ideological position, implicitly questioning the degree to which a children's story can be used to challenge conventional educational ideas.

The relative merits of domestic education as opposed to institutional schooling, and the interface between the two, were the subject of continuing debate throughout the period under consideration, and were addressed in a number of school stories, including Annie Keary's *Sidney Grey* (1857) and Kathleen Knox's *Captain Eva* (1880) as well as in the texts by Sherwood, May, Buckland and Searle referred to earlier. Nevertheless, the place of formal schooling received increasing attention as the century progressed, due in part to the growing need to educate children to take their place in a changing and increasingly complex environment. In my next chapter, I focus on the school as a community designed to prepare both boys and girls for their future roles in family and society.

Chapter 3

Worlds Apart: school as community and the work of socialisation

‘And is it really decided, dear mamma, – have you quite resolved to send me to school?’ asks twelve-year-old Geraldine Murray in the opening chapter of Anna Maria Sanders’ *Clarence House; or, The Misses Camroux’s Establishment* (1853). The news that a school has been chosen and that her departure is imminent fills Geraldine with dismay: ‘So soon mamma? Oh, how I dread that day! I who have never left home, how shall I feel among so many strangers?’

(2). However, Mrs Murray is unmoved, remaining adamant that the experience of boarding school is essential if her daughter is to learn to live with others in conformity with current expectations of femininity. These were based on the assumption that a girl would marry and, subduing her instincts and forgoing her own interests, devote herself to ‘completing, sweetening, and embellishing the existence of others’ (Greg, 1862: 436). Thus she explains:

‘[O]ne of my principal motives for sending you from home is, that by companionship with other young persons of your own age, you may learn to give up your own wishes occasionally [...] and to correct and subdue many unruly habits’. (2)

Unlike the parents depicted by Sewell in *Laneton Parsonage*, Mrs Murray does not regard the decision to send Geraldine to school as problematic and expresses no reservations about the appropriateness of formal schooling for a girl. Because attempts to teach her daughter at home have been unsuccessful, she places complete trust in the Misses Camroux’s ability to make good her social and intellectual shortcomings. Nevertheless, Geraldine’s unforeseen choice of ‘the thoughtless, the gay, the idle’ (12) amongst her schoolfellows as role models is used by Sanders to highlight the challenges faced by those who undertook to mould young people in conformity with society’s expectations.

The purpose of formal schooling

The exposure to the socialising influence of peers and adults outside the family circle is one factor which contemporary educational theorists identify both as a principal aim of schooling for both sexes, and as the feature which most clearly distinguishes public education in a school, even a small one run on domestic lines, from private education in the home. Thus in her *Remarks on Female Education* (1827), the schoolmistress and educationist Anne Pendered⁶⁹ argues that home schooling tends to give girls the sense that ‘the little circle in which they move [...] is the whole world’ (4-5), fostering ‘egotism’ and ‘an excess of self-complacency’ (5-6). In contrast:

The competition of talent, added to the views, feelings and habits, and the occasional opposition of interests, which will subsist in a greater or less degree in every school, will naturally lead to a moderate, and essentially correct estimate of individual merit, by means of which every child may readily find the proper level of her own understanding and requirements, in the little community of which she is a member. (6)

Advocates of formal schooling for boys put the case even more strongly. Edward Thring, reforming headmaster of Uppingham from 1853 to 1887, asserts:

Boys are sent out from their homes, where they *are* at home, and have their little comforts, to be trained amongst strangers. It is excellent that this should be so. How bad it would be if there were no corrective for the different failings of different homes, nothing to take a boy out of the pod in which he found himself, nothing to prevent his thinking that the pod ruled the world. (Thring, 1864:148)

Such reasoning underlies Sanders’ Mrs Murray’s decision to send her daughter to Clarence House and is echoed in numerous fictional texts which represent school first and foremost as a place where both boys and girls are sent to learn to live with others, and as an environment in

⁶⁹ Relatively little is known about Pendered’s career. However, records of valuations of property by Rowley, Son and Royce of Royston indicate that she moved to Camberwell in 1821 to enter into partnership with Mrs Sarah Evans Briggs who had established a girls’ school in her house in Denmark Hill. (Source: Cambridgeshire County Archives <http://calm.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ArchiveCatalogue>).

which the character is shaped, and when necessary transformed, to comply with prevailing social norms.

This focus on character formation in literary texts has led Dieter Petzold (1990) to assert that ‘socialization’ is the ‘primary interest’ (17) of the nineteenth-century school story. In her study *Public School Literature, Civic Education and the Politics of Male Adolescence* (2008), Jenny Holt takes this view further, arguing that a major aim of writers of school fiction for boys is to contribute to their ‘training for citizenship and statesmanship’ (4). She describes Hughes’ *Tom Brown’s School Days*, for example, as ‘a kind of training-manual for adolescent life’ (78). At the same time she shows how a number of texts, such as E.P.’s *Solomon’s Precept*, expose serious weaknesses in the way in which many schools were organised and run, showing ‘how repressive and violent social structures damaged the character and made the individual unfit as a citizen’ (155). In this chapter, I aim to apply Holt’s perspective to a wider range of texts, including those written for girls, in order to explore ways in which they both affirm and challenge the ability of schools to provide a social environment apart from the confines of the home in which a child’s character could develop in readiness for the roles and responsibilities he or she would be expected to assume in adulthood, both within the family and in wider society.

Schooling and gender expectations

As discussed in Chapter 1, schooling for both boys and girls was strongly rooted in the notion of separate spheres, which positioned women in the home and men in the world of work and public affairs. This disparity in roles underpins the distinct differences in the way in which both fictional and non-fictional educational discourses characterise schools for boys and girls. As already indicated earlier, boys’ schools are often portrayed as microcosms of society as a

whole, as ‘little worlds’ in which pupils are prepared for the exigencies of public life. Those for girls are generally depicted as surrogate families, in many respects replicating the domestic sphere which they will be expected to occupy as adults. In fiction, these images are widely used as mediums for exploring the effectiveness of schools as agencies of socialisation, and form the basis for both the endorsement and the questioning of the ideals underpinning the contrasting models of schooling. Thus both the limitations and the strengths of the family as a model for the girls’ school are highlighted in literature as well as in educational treatises and reports such as those of the Schools Inquiry Commission. Similarly, the communities depicted in many stories for boys reflect the dark side of the ‘great world’ as well as its merits and opportunities. Because of the differences in the ways in which formal schooling for the sexes was conceived and organised, I shall again consider books dealing with boys and girls separately, focusing first on examining ways in which selected texts treat the family as a model for girls’ education.

‘One immense family’: the promotion of the domestic ideal in Jane Hooper’ *Recollections of Mrs Anderson’s School* (1851)

The characterisation of the girls’ school as a family permeates nineteenth-century writing on education. As Christina De Bellaigue has pointed out, ‘the cultivation of a domestic notion of the school served to reinforce a conventional understanding of women’s role’ (2007: 148).

Many schoolmistresses consciously exemplified motherly qualities and cultivated warm and affectionate relationships with their pupils. For example, at Laleham, her school in Clapham, Hannah Pipe gave her 25 pupils a thorough grounding in a broad range of academic subjects,

training some of the first students to study at Girton and Newnham.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, this rigorous academic training was delivered within a home-like setting. ‘Much of their time in the evening is spent with me in the drawing room, where they read and work with me’, Miss Pipe wrote (Stoddart, 1908: 60). One former pupil remembered her as her ‘school-mother’ (47), while another recalled ‘Mrs Pipe’s “tucking-up” ’ at night (123).

In some schools, the pupils themselves were encouraged to assume familial roles, with older ones acting as ‘mother’ to the little ones. At the boarding school attended by the novelist Annie Keary in the 1830s, for example, every older girl ‘adopted’ a younger one. In her memoir of her sister, Eliza Keary comments, ‘There were many that liked to call Annie “mother” ’ (Keary, 1882: 56). Commenting on widespread parental preference for such establishments, the Schools Inquiry Commissioners noted that, in theory, ‘[t]he daily life [...] being more like that in an ordinary family, [girls] can be better taught what is proper behaviour in the different positions in which they may be placed in later life’ (SIC vol. VII: 46). When they eventually concluded that girls needed increasingly to be educated for roles outside the home, and so to be provided with grammar schools similar to those already existing for boys, their recommendation met with considerable public opposition. ‘The sphere of women is home. Such a cultivation as will make a really good wife, sister, or daughter, to educated men, is the thing to be aimed at’, one reviewer wrote (*Quarterly Review* April 1869: 465), warning against the imminent rise of the ‘man-woman’ or ‘irrepressible “femme savante” ’. In support of his argument he quoted Sewell’s defence of the domestic style of girls’ schooling, and he stated ‘objections to crowding girls together in large schools’ (Sewell 1867, II: 397).

⁷⁰ An account of the school and Miss Pipe’s vision of girls’ education can be found in *The Life and Letters of Hannah E. Pipe*. Ed. Anna M. Stoddart (1908).

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, fiction continued to reflect the ideal of the girls' school as a family, taking almost no account of the growth of larger schools which aimed to prepare students for roles outside the home. The grandly named establishment in Sarah Doudney's *Monksbury College* (1878), for example, is little different in size and ethos from the select seminary run by Mrs Grace in Mary Hughes' *The Rebellious School-girl* (1821), illustrating the endurance of the ideal over the greater part of the period despite challenges as the century progressed.

While support for the domestic model of girls' schooling is implicit in many such stories, some writers use the genre to endorse the ideal much more overtly. In her Preface to *Recollections of Mrs Anderson's School* (1851), for example, Jane Hooper addresses the 'parents and guardians' of her young readers, explicitly commending the family-style boarding school featured in her story over both the new 'Ladies' Colleges' (vi)⁷¹ and 'a scrambling, careless, inefficient system of education at home' (ix). Defining the purpose of a girl's education in terms of training for the duties and responsibilities of marriage and motherhood, she portrays her fictional Mrs Anderson as embodying 'the dignity and sanctity of the maternal life' (vii). At Avenue House she is shown to provide a substitute home for the protagonist, Margaret Granby, whose parents are in India, coming almost to think of her as her own child. Margaret is even allowed to have her pets with her, because Mrs Anderson's house is 'to be home as well as school' (9) while her parents are away.

Hooper's depiction of the school is conveyed principally through Margaret's first-person narrative, which focuses on the characters of the different girls and their teachers, and the

⁷¹ It is likely that she was referring here to Queen's College, Harley Street and The Ladies' College in Bedford Square, founded in 1848 and 1849 respectively to provide a range of academic courses for girls from the age of twelve upwards, as well as vocational training for governesses. Students were given a free choice of which courses and classes they attended, and Hooper especially deplored the 'running about from one lecture to another' (ix).

ways in which they develop through mutual influence. Though small, Avenue House is a diverse community representative of society at large: 'We had among us the strong and the weak – the poor and the rich – the overbearing and the sycophantic – the noble-minded and the mean – the naturally refined and the naturally coarse-hearted' (31). Initially, her disdain for the 'vulgar, purse-proud parvenus' (20) among them gains Margaret some enemies, but gradually she learns to mix with her peers, making two close friends from whom she learns the virtue of unselfishness. She also discovers a particular aptitude for caring for the youngest children, ultimately winning 'the reward of amiability' for having 'shown the best disposition, and the greatest kindness to others, during the half-year' (272). She states that the Principal 'attached more importance to the giving of this prize than to the presentation of any other' (272). Its award underlines the success with which the values modelled and inculcated by Mrs Anderson have been transmitted to Margaret, who provides readers with an exemplar of the qualities necessary for a contented and productive womanhood.

Hooper further reinforces the representation of the lives of selfless service for which the girls of Avenue House are preparing by introducing the histories of Miss Allen and Miss Stuart, teachers in the school. Miss Allen joins the school after the death of the man she was to marry. Described as 'gentle, patient, soft-hearted, and strong-minded' (134), she devotes herself unstintingly to her pupils, becoming a favourite with all. When the girls learn of her circumstances, their sympathies are awakened and she acquires a new interest in their eyes. In contrast, Miss Stuart is a gifted teacher who is respected rather than loved by her pupils. However, she proves luckier in love when, against all expectation, she is reunited with the fiancé she believed had rejected her and wedding preparations begin. As a result, her standing in the school is considerably enhanced, leading Margaret to observe: 'Even school-girls feel

instinctively that a married woman is a more important personage than an old maid; a woman who has a husband to support her, than one who supports herself" (245).

For Margaret and her friends these events in the lives of their teachers are shown to open a vista '*into the world* – into actual life' (254). Their responses to them and their discussion of them reveal the extent to which their hopes and aspirations for the future are defined by marriage with its attendant status and perceived security. 'Poor Miss Allen' evokes sympathy, while Miss Stuart, soon to become Lady Russell, is overwhelmed with gifts and expressions of affection and regard. The story's ending, in which Margaret looks forward to being a bridesmaid at her first wedding, gives further support to the notion that a woman's happiness is ultimately to be found in marriage, and reinforces Hooper's conviction that the domestic sphere constitutes the social world to which women should aspire.

A divided family and the challenge to the ideal in Mary Martha Sherwood's *The Golden Garland of Inestimable Delights* (1849)

In her depiction of Avenue House and its inmates, Hooper admits no criticism of the domestic model of girls' schooling and the social values it upheld. Nevertheless, as the nineteenth century progressed, the capacity of such 'quasi-homes' to operate effectively was increasingly called into question both in fiction and in reports and treatises on education. Many of their perceived shortcomings related to their inability to provide a coherent curriculum and stimulating teaching for a small number of pupils. Reporting on girls' schools in Lancashire, for instance, one of the Schools Inquiry Commissioners observed:

The 15 or 20 girls are of all ages, from 8 to 16; it is impossible to work them all together, and impossible to keep all employed under one teacher; hence half or two-thirds are left to their own devices while the rest are saying their lessons, and thus contract dawdling and listless habits, which would destroy the effect even of far better teaching than they receive. There is no system in these little schools; things go as chance or the momentary convenience of the mistress directs; [...] the total number is too small to excite not merely

emulation but any spirit or sense of movement. (SIC vol. IX: 802)

The issues relating to teaching and the curriculum content will be explored in detail later in this thesis. Significant for this chapter is the fact that, as shown in Chapter 1, the schools were also widely criticised on social grounds. Despite a staunch support of the domestic model of schooling indicated at the beginning of this chapter, Pendered acknowledged that pupils from different backgrounds could not be expected ‘to feel towards each other, precisely like members of one family, who are united by the same attachments, and same general interests’ (1823: 181), and conceded that ‘alienation of feeling’, ‘separation into distinct parties’ and ‘occasional heat of opposition’ (181) could arise as a result. Forty years later, the Schools Inquiry Commissioners expressed a similar view. While recognising the advantages to girls ‘of being thrown on one’s own resources, and gaining some experience of the world, and its ways’, they also noted ‘the evil tendencies of coteries, petty jealousies, and unprofitable talk’ (SIC vol. IX: 818) prevalent in many boarding schools, and drew attention to covert bullying ‘where a girl is at the mercy of her companions’ (SIC vol. IX: 836). Reporting on girls’ boarding schools in the West Riding, Assistant Commissioner Joshua Fitch went so far as to characterise the single-sex environment as a totally inappropriate setting for preparing pupils for the domestic roles they were destined to fulfil. He observed:

An establishment of a semi-conventual kind in which girls see each other only, does not resemble any world which they are ever likely to enter; and I cannot find that there are any moral advantages in the boarding school system to compensate for the evil of removing a girl from the far more healthy and natural atmosphere of an orderly home, in which there are father, mother, and brothers. (SIC vol. IX: 285-6)

He discovered too that there was little in the curriculum provided in such schools to compensate for the artificiality of a social environment which, by precluding contact with men, failed utterly to replicate the domestic setting in which girls would be expected to live. He commented: ‘I cannot find that any part of the training given in ladies’ schools educates

them for domestic life, or prepares them for duties which are supposed to be especially womanly'. (SIC vol. IX: 289-90)

Fitch's remarks not only raise questions about the efficacy of much female education, but also call into question the whole rationale underlying it. Through a close focus on relationships and character development within girls' schools, a number of fictional texts corroborate his findings, exposing significant discrepancies between practice and the ideals embodied in the model of the school as a family.

The propensity of girls of differing temperaments and backgrounds to disagree and form 'distinct parties' is Mary Martha Sherwood's central concern in *The Golden Garland of Inestimable Delights* (1849). She describes how Craycombe House, a fashionable boarding school run by the refined Mrs Brandreth, is taken over by the Misses Molyneux, two sisters of straightened means and firm Christian principles. Whereas the aim of the Misses Molyneux is to train 'dutiful daughters, domestic wives, or affectionate parents' (67), Mrs Brandreth has educated her pupils 'for the world, and for that only' (67). In this, she has enjoyed the support of parents who want their daughters to acquire 'accomplishments', and are appalled when the Molyneux sisters insist on giving 'the best and the most of [their] time to things that might just as well be taught at home' (237). As a result of what Sherwood explicitly terms Mrs Brandreth's 'deficiency', the girls display little of the mutual affection and kindness fundamental to the domestic model of girls' schooling. Instead, disputes and rivalries among them result in 'a house divided', undermining the vision of a Christian family to which the sisters resolutely adhere. For example, when Margaret Scott offends another girl, the two are described as becoming 'like King Charles and Oliver Cromwell' (148). Margaret is ostracised by her former friends, leading Sherwood to comment: 'There is no tyranny, no bondage like that inflicted in a girls' school. [...] Girls evince their displeasure at or dislike of each other by

what one may truly call a perpetual blister' (153-4). A further rift is occasioned by the admittance of a tradesman's daughter to the school. Styling themselves the 'aristocratic' party, some of the girls join in a boycott of the hapless Mary Anne, declaring that they will 'neither admit any intimacy with Miss Higgins, nor walk, nor dance with her, nor suffer the slightest approach to familiarity' (193).

In *The Golden Garland*, Sherwood sets out deliberately to depict the difficulties that inevitably arise when individuals subscribing to conflicting values are brought together in a close community. At Craycombe House, the protagonists make no secret of their antipathy towards one another, and Sherwood is explicit in censuring the conduct of those girls who refuse to live as members of a Christian family as exemplified in the example and teaching of the Misses Molyneux. She does not question the validity of the ideal itself, which had informed her own educational ventures in both India and Worcestershire.⁷² Probably drawing upon her own experience as the Principal of a girls' boarding school, she nevertheless highlights serious obstacles to its realisation in practice. First, the educational ideals articulated by the Misses Molyneux are shown to conflict with the ambitions many parents have for their daughters. Schoolmistresses who gave evidence to the Schools Inquiry Commission claimed that the demands of parents constituted one of the main problems they had to deal with, often forcing them to give more attention to the acquisition of the showy accomplishments thought necessary to attract a husband than to the development of the skills and attitudes appropriate to pupils' long-term future roles as wives and mothers.⁷³ Secondly,

⁷² See *The Life and Times of Mrs Sherwood, (1775-1851)*, ed. F.J. Harvey Darton (1910), Chapters XVII and XVIII.

⁷³ See SIC vol. IX: 793 which summarises evidence from principals of girls' schools in the West Riding. They alleged that many parents did not care whether their daughters profited from their education 'so long as they possess those showy qualities which are supposed to command the admiration of the other sex'. Fitch's evidence gleaned from parents of girls in Lancashire schools supports this view, concluding 'the accomplishments which

as Fitch was to contend later, Sherwood argues that a community composed only of girls has the capacity to reinforce the pettiness and malice she regards as typical of the female character. It is significant that while the Misses Molyneux are shown to be successful in 'improving' the innately kind Mary Anne Higgins, they fail to influence most of the girls who have already imbibed 'false lessons' (383), and their enterprise promises to flourish only when the 'fashionable' element is removed from the school. Thus although Sherwood clearly articulates her ideal of a model of girls' schooling which promotes conventional notions of femininity, she shows too how its realisation is made problematic by threats to the model both from within and outside the community.

Peers, parents and preceptresses: influence and authority in the school community

Although she does not explicitly question the domestic model of female education, and indeed appears to assent to it unreservedly, Sherwood's portrayal of the location and exercise of power and influence within the school community effectively serves to destabilise the whole concept of the school as a family. At Craycombe Lodge, the authority of the Misses Molyneux is undermined by both the pupils' allegiance to their parents, and the impact of peer influence. The concept of 'influence' pervades nineteenth-century educational discourse and is central to this text. It refers to the indirect transmission of moral, spiritual and cultural values, particularly through association and example. It could operate for good or ill, and was not infrequently in conflict with formal authority. Pendered, for example, describes the power of 'that influence, which the young are continually exercising over each other within the sphere of a school' (1827: 167), accepting that while it often worked for good, the 'risk of meeting

they value are those which promise rather to increase [a girl's] attractiveness before marriage than her happiness or usefulness after that event' (301).

with unsuitable companions, and pernicious examples' (9) meant that it also had the potential to harm. Whilst acknowledging the importance of 'the influence of a cultivated and high-minded mistress', the Schools Inquiry Commissioners also recognised the negative impact upon pupils of the companionship of peers whose 'tone' was not high (SIC vol. IX: 818).

In focusing deliberately on the conflicts which can occur between the influence exercised by the principal of a school and that exerted both by parents on their children and by pupils over one another, *The Golden Garland* exposes fundamental differences between the relationships in a school, even one based on the domestic model, and those which characterise family life. In so doing, it illuminates the distinction between home and school authority defined with particular clarity by Sherwood's contemporary, the pioneering teacher and educationalist Emily Shirreff, in her theoretical treatise *Intellectual Education* (1858).

Positive and distinct rules are laid down for the government of a school, [...] but the child is free to disobey and incur the penalty. The authority enforces that and no more; it makes no claim to a willing obedience [...]. Its great defect is that it has little or no moral influence. In a school the master *teaches* and *commands*, but it is the public opinion of the young community which sways feeling and principle. It is, and ought to be, far different at home. Parental rule is not the sway of a temporarily constituted authority, submitted to for certain purposes and under certain conditions; it claims the heart and will no less than the outward action. (279)

'For better, for worse': Horace Mayhew and the subversion of the ideal

While Sherwood depicts the difficulties implicit in running a school as if it were a natural family, a few writers, including Horace Mayhew and Mary Gellie, use the genre to expose the flaws inherent in the domestic ideal itself. As might be expected, the familial roles exemplified and nurtured in most school fiction for girls are those of mother, daughter and sister. However, a small number of texts feature the practice of some girls undertaking a male role within the female community, in particular that of husband. In so doing, they express the inequity which characterised relationships within marriage during the nineteenth century, and highlight ways

in which girls' schools sanctioned and actively reinforced the subordinate role of women in society at large.

The inferior status afforded to women and its relationship to education had been the subject of feminist writing since the end of the seventeenth century, when Mary Astell warned of 'the dangers of an ill education and unequal marriage' (Springborg 1996:33). A century later Mary Wollstonecraft argued that the reform of female education was essential to the stability of marriage, asserting that a woman must be 'prepared by education to become the companion of man' (Wollstonecraft 1791-2: viii). By the nineteenth century the philosophical and political response to sexual inequality had gained considerable impetus. Also advocating the ideal of marriage as an equal partnership, John Stuart Mill declared that the subjection of women was both caused and reinforced by education:

The masters of women wanted more than simple obedience, and they turned the whole force of education to effect their purpose. All women are brought up from the very earliest years in the belief that their ideal of character is the very opposite to that of men; not self-will, and government by self-control, but submission, and yielding to the will of others. (Mill [1869] 1984: 271)

This view was supported by women such as Josephine Butler, who in *Woman's Work and Woman's Culture* (1869) argued that the dignity of women depended on the realisation of a 'true domestic ideal based upon real affection, equal marriage, and virtuous life' (xlvii – xlviii). This in its turn could be achieved only through the provision of 'a higher and more diffused education' (xlviii) and by opportunities to participate fully in public life. It is significant that her co-authors in pleading the cause of women included educationalists such as Elizabeth Wolstenholme who was actively involved in the campaign for the reform of girls' schools, and feminists such as Frances Power Cobbe, who was relentless in deploring the concept of 'Man the ultimate *raison d'être* of Woman' (23). Although the legal position of women improved slowly following the passing of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1857 and the

Married Women's Property Act 1870, family life continued to be conducted on a patriarchal model throughout the century.

One text which questions both the domestic ideal which underpinned female education and the nature of the marital relationship upon which family life was built is Horace Mayhew's *Letters Left at the Pastrycook's* (1853). Here, in a series of letters purporting to be written to a friend by Kitty Clover, a pupil at the select Princesses' College, Mayhew adopts a sharply ironic first-person narrative voice to expose the dangers and duplicity he perceives as inherent in the family model of female education. On one level, he mocks the establishment's pretensions to offer pupils a substitute home. The accommodation is described as 'positively wretched', while the Principal, the self-styled 'maternal' Mrs Rodwell, is portrayed by Kitty as having 'long thin claws [...] exactly like a lobster's' and quite unlike the 'dear fat arms' (6) of her own mother. On another level, the assumption of familial roles by the pupils is shown to be exploitative and destructive in a number of ways. As Kitty is startled to discover, 'girls who are fond of each other *become husband and wife*' (17) at the school. She enters into wedlock with Meggy Sharpe, a girl who is envied by her peers because she is already engaged to 'a handsome young midshipman'. 'Isn't she a lucky girl?' Kitty comments ingenuously. However, her illusions about marriage are soon destroyed. While Meggy's rationalisation of her role evokes Ruskin's representation of the male as the protector of the defenceless woman, it also requires Kitty to become subject to her every whim. As Meggy's 'little wifey' she is expected to wait on her, obey her, and to share all her worldly goods with her, and reports: 'She is carrying out this law, I must say, with the strictest impartiality, for I have scarcely a thing left' (19).

In assuming their respective roles, both girls become familiar with the prevailing expectations of husband and wife in the natural family. These also include the woman's duty

to devote herself to the care of the children. Once wedded to Meggy Sharpe, Kitty is expected to be a 'mother' to 'two or three tiresome little plagues', becoming 'responsible for their clean faces, tidy clothes, and good behaviour' (96). While the official justification for this practice is to fit 'woman [...] for the sphere of love she is born to adorn' (96), it appears in fact to be a means of relieving teachers of their work, and simply leads to resentment among the girls. Thus Mayhew demonstrates how the practice of 'marriage' may mask unofficial fagging as well as widespread bullying. After she succeeds in obtaining a 'divorce' and is allowed to remarry, it is not surprising that Kitty takes care to be the husband. Consequently, in her anxiety to avoid the harassment she experienced as a wife, she shows both her rejection of a conventional female role and her tacit acceptance of male dominance. At the same time, her assumption of the role makes it probable that she will develop and exercise the very characteristics she so deplored in Meggy Sharpe. Mayhew thus effectively subverts the domestic model of female education by representing Princesses' College as an establishment which, while purporting to prepare girls for family life, succeeds only in teaching them to resent and even reject their femininity while simultaneously conditioning them to accept male control. In the process, he also parodies and challenges current ideals of marriage, using the school story as a vehicle for commenting on an issue of considerable social concern.

Models of community in schools for boys

As outlined in Chapter 1, in comparison with those for girls, nineteenth-century boys' schools were much more diverse both in size and structure, and in the aims and rationale underlying the education they provided. Consequently, they offered pupils a variety of social environments. These ranged from those modelled, like Arnold's Rugby, on 'one of Aristotle's or Plato's perfect kingdoms' (Bamford, 1970: 101), and which sought to train the nation's élite

for roles of responsibility and leadership, to those which attempted to replicate the private family to ‘afford pupils all the advantages of school, without sacrificing all the comforts, refinements, and moral influences that are peculiar to home’ (De Carteret-Bisson, 1872: xxxi).⁷⁴ The little school run by Thomas Arnold at Laleham in Middlesex between 1819 and 1828 appears to have been a good example of the latter kind. There, Arnold worked on a one-to-one basis with each boy in turn, so that ‘each pupil felt assured of Arnold’s sympathy in his own particular growth and character of talent’ (Stanley 1844: 43), and much of the pupils’ leisure time was spent with the growing Arnold family.⁷⁵

Despite instances of effective practice, such boys’ schools, like those for girls, attracted increasing censure as the century progressed. One of their chief detractors was Matthew Arnold, Thomas Arnold’s eldest son, who worked as one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Schools from 1851 to 1886. Invited to report to the Newcastle Commission⁷⁶ of 1858-61 on the provision of popular education on the continent, he found significant differences between the lyceums of France, which had been ‘formed by modern society, with modern modes of operation, to meet modern wants’ (M. Arnold 1864: 65), and English ‘educational homes’ (58), which he judged to be ill-equipped to train their middle-class pupils for useful citizenship in a changing society. For increasing numbers of boys, he argued, ‘not *school a family*, but rather *school a little world* is the right ideal’ (59).

⁷⁴ Many examples of similar advertisements can be found in other contemporary scholastic directories, such as *Crockford’s Scholastic Directory* (1861), as well as in the national and provincial press.

⁷⁵ ‘My pupils all come up into the drawing-room a little before tea’, Arnold wrote to a friend, ‘and stay for some time, some reading, others talking, playing chess or backgammon, looking at pictures, etc.’ A.P. Stanley, *The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold*. 2 vols. (1844), vol. 1: 75).

⁷⁶ In 1858, the Duke of Newcastle was appointed to chair a Royal Commission ‘to inquire into the state of public education in England and to consider and report what measures, if any, are required for the extension of sound and cheap elementary instruction to all classes of the people.’ Its recommendations led to the 1870 Education Act which made provision for the elementary education of all children aged 5-13.

Arnold's criticisms were echoed by the School Inquiry Commissioners. For example, reporting on schools in the West Riding, Joshua Fitch described small, private establishments as being suitable only for boys who were otherwise 'unfit to enter on the rough competition of a larger school' (SIC vol. IX: 266), endorsing Matthew Arnold's image of the school as a 'little world' which provided a training ground for public life.

This ability of the large school to function as a microcosm of the wider world is stressed repeatedly in nineteenth-century educational discourse. Summarising its findings, for example, the Public Schools Commission of 1861-4 explicitly praises the capacity of the 'little world' of the school to give a boy's character 'an education of the same kind as it is destined afterwards to undergo in the great world of business and society' (PSC vol. I: 44). The same concept recurs in numerous fictional texts of the period, where it underpins the exploration of the ways in which such schools prepare boys for adulthood. In the next part of this chapter, I examine ways in which stories by George Melly and Henry Adams use the image both to promote and to challenge the ideals it embodies.

'Learning the world': George Melly and the promotion of the ideal

The ideal of a school which, through replicating significant features of adult society, prepares a boy to take his place in the 'mighty world' is endorsed with particular clarity in George Melly's *School Experiences of a Fag at a Private and Public School* (1854). In this text, Melly draws on his own experience both of a private boarding school and of Arnold's Rugby, where he was sent in 1840, in order to delineate the ideal of a successful public school. While he portrays the management of Elm-house Preparatory School as being so lax that abuses of all kinds go unnoticed and unchecked, he applauds the régime at 'Harby' for being 'founded on the principle of local self-government' (231) pioneered by Arnold at Rugby, in which the boys

themselves exercise considerable power. In this respect, Melly claims, Harby is ‘a little world’, epitomising the model upheld by Matthew Arnold and Fitch. He asserts:

[T]he great value of a public school is its close resemblance to the outer world around it. At Harby we had our monitors – a local council of forty; our public meetings – the rest of the school being often summoned to deliberate together; our laws, made by the majority and obeyed by all; our taxes – and very heavy we found them; our periodical press, and very amusing it was (231).

In characterising Harby in these terms, Melly’s self-confessed aim is to demonstrate the effectiveness of the monitorial system which constituted the central pillar of the social structure in the public schools. It was designed to prepare older pupils for roles of responsibility and leadership in public life by appointing them to undertake specific duties in the school, including the keeping of order and enforcing of rules. These responsibilities were generally accompanied by the right to ‘fag’ younger boys, using them to carry out menial tasks such as lighting fires, making tea, or fielding at cricket, and to administer punishment as an ultimate sanction.⁷⁷ In his analysis of Arnold’s cultivation of ruling-class masculinity at Rugby, Fabrice Neddam has pointed out that ‘the fundamental notion’ boys learned through such practices ‘was that of hierarchy’ (Neddam, 2004:305), which in the school reflected the wider social order. This view is reflected in Melly’s own contention that the delegation of authority to the monitors and the relegation of younger boys to a position of servitude, simply legitimises and regulates the power structures that occur naturally in any human society. He assures his readers that those chosen to act as monitors are not only ‘the most learned, and the

⁷⁷ In his evidence to the Public Schools Commission, H.M. Butler, the Head Master at Harrow from 1859-1885, described the duties of a monitor as being ‘to keep reasonable order among the boys of his house, especially during the evening; to assist the master who calls the “bill” in school in maintaining quiet; to investigate and to punish any serious moral offence, as bullying, drinking, gross language or acts, &c.; or any violation of a well-known school rule’ (PSC vol. I: 221). Monitors had authority to punish offenders by ‘extra fagging; a reprimand; and caning; the heaviest of all, which would be inflicted for gross bullying, being a “public whopping” – *i.e.* a caning by the head boy in presence of the whole school’ (vol. I: 221). Monitors at Harrow were encouraged to deal with indiscipline without reference to the masters.

oldest members of the school' (232), but usually 'the greatest favourites' (233). Such boys already possess considerable influence over their school-fellows, and so, Melly asserts, '[t]hat system [...] which best provides for its judicious exercise in a community of boys, is the most salutary' (306). He maintains too that older boys are better able than masters to understand their fellow pupils, and to 'discover the weaknesses and vices of the school' (307), going so far as to suggest that in delegating responsibility to the boys themselves, the masters 'are but constitutional monarchs' (302).

However, in order to provide opportunities for older pupils to rehearse the exercise of the authority they were expected to assume on leaving school, the monitorial system required a proletariat to be governed. This was supplied by the fags, whose subjection to the rule and demands of the monitors served to reinforce awareness of the inequalities characterising society both within and beyond the confines of the school, and frequently led to suffering and abuse. Further, as Claudia Nelson has pointed out, the fact that many of the fags' duties consisted of work typically done by female servants resulted in the creation of 'a gendered hierarchy within a single-sex society' (Nelson 1991: 65), a situation similar to that brought about by the mock- marriages and unofficial fagging Mayhew describes in a girls' school. Melly was prompted to write *School Experiences* by the attacks on fagging and other aspects of life in the major public schools which appeared in the press from the 1830s onwards. For example, 'Fagging and Flogging at Winchester' (*Quarterly Journal of Education* XVII, 1835), already referred to in Chapter 1, denounced fagging as an 'odious and demoralizing usage' (90) which fostered arrogance and servility. The considerable shortcomings of the fagging system were later highlighted in evidence to the Clarendon Commission. One witness had removed his fourteen-year-old son from Westminster because he alleged that the use of fagging amounted to 'slavery' (PSC vol. III: 476). In his own submission, the boy described

life at the school as 'intolerable' (494).⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Melly chooses to emphasise the advantages of the system, describing it as a 'sheet-anchor' (307) in times of difficulty.

Although his anecdotes of school life do include accounts of ill-treatment at the hands of the monitors, he concentrates on providing examples of ways in which they protect the weak and restrain the vicious and unruly. In his view, the system succeeds partly because it imposes order on a community of boys where, he considers, 'there must inevitably be much oppression and tyranny' (305), and partly because the pupils themselves accept the inequalities upon which it is based. He concludes:

In every community – be it a family, or a township, a school or a nation – the strong will, the powerful intellect, the matured judgement, exert a predominating influence over the weak, the thoughtless, and the inexperienced; this superior force is not only innate, but acknowledged, and under due regulation it is beneficial to all. (306)

In assuming the roles of both fag and monitor in the 'little world' of school, Melly argues that the boys of Harby are familiarised with the structures of the society in which they will exercise power as adults. He claims that the monitorial system is successful in teaching them to obey and to rule, to serve, to debate and confer, and ultimately to legislate. In his final chapters he underlines his confidence in the system by speculating on a future in which his peers pursue distinguished careers in the service of the nation and empire. Melly himself wrote his book from the perspective of a successful businessman preparing to stand for parliament.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ William Meyrick, the boy concerned, told the Commissioners of getting up at 3am to light a fire and boil water for a senior who would inflict brutal punishments if the tasks were not performed punctually and efficiently. He said that the masters were little in evidence and did not interfere with these practices: 'They do not want to know too much; they do not pretend to know too much; but they must know it' (PSC vol. III: 493).

⁷⁹ Melly was finally elected M.P. for Stoke-on-Trent in 1868, and served until 1875.

Henry Adams and the fictional critique of the ideal

Evidence of the abuse of monitorial power in some schools led the Public Schools

Commissioners to warn of the dangers in delegating so much responsibility for the day-to-day government of a school to the pupils themselves, and to stress the need for the headmaster to keep a careful watch on the workings of the system. They wrote:

There is a risk lest [this authority] should be abused from defect of temper or judgement; lest it should make those entrusted with it imperious and tyrannical, or priggish and self-sufficient; [...] and lest, if it fall into unfit hands, it should become an instrument of positive evil. There is some risk also lest the Masters should, more than is safe or right, leave the discipline of the school to take care of itself [...]. To guard against these dangers effectually requires, we have no doubt, much judgement on the part of the Head Master, and no little care. (PSC vol. 1: 42)

Nonetheless, they concluded that incidents of abuse were ‘exceptional’ (43), and overall concluded that the ‘discipline and training’ in the nine schools surveyed were worthy of ‘high praise’.

The Commissioners’ ambivalence towards the workings of the monitorial system and its impact on both fags and their ‘masters’ is echoed in the school novels of Henry Adams whose work spanned four decades from 1851 to 1895. Drawing on his experience as a pupil and a master at Winchester during the 1830s and 1840s, he uses fiction to explore the limitations as well as the potential benefits of the power relationships engendered by ‘self-government’.

In *The Boys of Westonbury; or, The Monitorial System* (1876), Adams’ stated purpose is to determine whether or not the monitorial system is effective in controlling bullying in large schools. The reports of the Clarendon and Taunton Commissions had generated considerable debate on the issue. He makes it clear in his Preface that as ‘[p]ublic feeling on the subject is in a very unsettled state’ (viii), there is a need for it to ‘be decisively and finally determined’ (viii).

The plot of the novel centres on the changes that take place at Westonbury College when a set of trustworthy and capable monitors is succeeded by a group of boys eminently unfitted for office. In the first part of the book, two new pupils, Harry Oliver and Charlie Poole, incur the spite of Parsons, 'a beastly bully' (77). His campaign of harassment and intimidation comes to the notice of Arthur Sydenham, the head monitor. A keen oarsman, Sydenham successfully protects the two juniors by making them his 'boat-fags', using them to crew his boat and incidentally giving them lessons in rowing. However, when Sydenham and other trustworthy seniors leave the school, Parsons and several unreliable boys are appointed to replace them as monitors. The prospect so appals Cobbe, one of Poole's friends, that he successfully pleads with his father to remove him from the school. He writes:

Bears, and foxes, and wolves are all very well in a menagerie, but they are not pleasant to live with; and is not Sykes as rough as any bear, Empson as sly as any fox, and as for that brute Parsons, where would you find a wolf to match him? (190)

Once these boys are in office, Poole and Oliver again become victims of bullying, this time at the hands of the monitors themselves. In addition, their protégé, new boy Herbie Locke, is systematically victimised by Parsons, who makes him one of his 'room fags'. Whereas Adams had represented the experience of fagging for Sydenham as a pleasurable apprenticeship in the art of rowing, attendance on Parsons is portrayed as abject slavery:

When there was no work to be done, Parsons took care to make some; and if, either through weariness, a mistake, or the impossibility of doing what was ordered, the tasks were indifferently executed, sharp words and heavy blows were the certain consequence. (224)

When Parsons threatens to beat Locke publicly for alleged impudence, Poole and Oliver decide to take him home for his own protection, thus forcing the headmaster to investigate. Although none of the monitors involved are publicly expelled, all leave the school by the end of the half, and Dr Formby resolves to put in place certain safeguards to guard against the possibility of similar conduct on the part of their successors. He rules that in future, no

monitor will be allowed personally to beat a boy who has aggrieved him. Further, all thrashings must be authorised by the Council of five senior monitors and afterwards reported to a tutor or the headmaster.

By concluding his book with the intervention of the headmaster and the instigation of these curbs on monitorial rule, Adams makes it clear that pupil ‘self-government’ needs careful oversight by the school authorities if it is not to degenerate into tyranny. However, although Dr Formby’s reforms are shown to go some way to restricting the powers of the monitors at Westonbury, they do not address other flaws in the system which are exposed in this text. One is the monitors’ right to inflict corporal punishment at all, a question which was addressed by the Public Schools Commissioners. They had concluded that by the 1860s the use of flogging generally had diminished.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, while at Westminster, for instance, this appeared to be true of punishments administered by the masters, those meted out by the seniors to younger boys were deemed sometimes ‘undeserved or excessive’, and inflicted ‘from individual caprice or in the excitement of passion’ (vol. I: 162-3). The Commissioners’ recommendations included ‘entirely reforming the present system of punishments in use among the boys’ (vol. I: 173).⁸¹ At Harrow and Rugby, where monitors also had the power to administer physical punishment, the Commissioners considered that adequate checks were in place to prevent abuse even though staff appeared unaware of the offences for which it was given.

Adams represents ‘thrashing’ as the chief means by which monitors assert their power and maintain order at Westonbury. As such, he makes it clear that it engenders fear and resentment

⁸⁰ The Commissioners reported that generally ‘flogging, which twenty or thirty years ago was resorted to as matter of course for the most trifling offences, is now used sparingly, and applied only to serious ones’ (PSC vol. I: 44).

⁸¹ These reforms included ‘putting down the use of rackets, caps, and other such instruments of punishment, and the practice of kicking’ (vol. I: 173).

among the younger boys. However, he is concerned much more with its arbitrary and malicious exercise than with questioning the monitors' right to use it in any circumstances, and in fact it is the threat of physical punishment rather than its implementation which brings the plot to its climax.

In *Schoolboy Honour* (1861), an earlier text, Adams pursues an anti-flogging agenda much more overtly, almost certainly in response to the public outrage generated by widespread reporting of a number of cases of excessive physical punishment. The most widely publicised was that of Thomas Hopley, who was convicted of the manslaughter of his pupil Reginald Chancellor in 1860, but others at Harrow (1854), Eton (1856), Bath Grammar School (1856) and Winchester (1872)⁸² were taken up by the press. Adams describes how the boys of Halminster dread the beatings of Hawke, the school captain, far more than the floggings of Dr. Campbell, the headmaster.

It was one thing for a fellow to be whipped with a birch rod, and another to be thrashed with a whalebone or an ash stick: one thing to receive half-a-dozen or so of sharp cuts that would sting for the time, and cause little further inconvenience; and another for them to have their coats cut to pieces on their backs, and the backs themselves one mass of sores and bruises for a fortnight. (249)

When a junior fails to doff his hat in the sixth-form library he is given forty such stripes by Hawke. Adams describes the proceedings in dramatic detail, conveying his revulsion at the nature of the punishment. Further abuse of monitorial power leads to Hawke's deposition from the captaincy. While supporting the monitors' authority in principle, Dr Campbell makes it clear that it should never become a pretext for vindictiveness or cruelty, asserting that 'he is but a bad ruler, either in a school or out of one, who can govern only by brute force' (362).

⁸² These and other examples are quoted in Ian Gibson, *The English Vice: Beating, Sex and Shame in Victorian England and After* (1978): 90-97.

Such incidents raise the question of how those who govern in this way are given such power over other boys. At both Westonbury and Halminster monitors are appointed on the basis of academic achievement rather than temperamental or moral suitability. Thus Parsons succeeds to office as a result of success in an examination, a custom typical of schools such as Rugby and Winchester at the period. Dr Formby concedes that checks are needed to prevent abuse of monitorial power because, although he is confident that the next set of monitors will provide 'good and kindly government', without oversight there is no guarantee 'that a bad state of things will not return in the next generation' (370). However, that oversight clearly cannot guarantee that only boys who are fit to rule will be appointed to govern. Adams' appraisal of the monitorial system therefore concludes less decisively than he had intended.

Counter-influences and the underworld of school

Like Melly, Adams conceives his fictional schools as images of 'the great world' (1861: 41). However they are never idealised. He makes it clear that they are not 'moral paradises' (1861: 41), but flawed institutions whose social structures and the relationships they engender have the capacity to destroy as well as to nurture a boy's potential for growing into a productive and responsible citizen. In particular, he shows how the monitorial system may corrupt and oppress when it is unchecked, or when power is entrusted to those who abuse it. Thus Hawke and Parsons, both inherently sadistic, use their positions to tyrannise both their peers and younger boys. Neither shows any understanding of the principles of justice and accountability upon which the system is theoretically based, and neither is judged fit to lead or govern in the public sphere.

Adams emphasises in *Schoolboy Honour* that misuse of power in a school is ultimately more damaging to the oppressor than to the oppressed. Nevertheless, in *The Boys of Westonbury* his

characterisation of Herbie Locke presents a vivid picture of a boy ‘fairly broken down’ by Parsons’ cruelty. In the same text, he depicts the wider impact of tyrannical governance upon the school community, when Parsons’ persecution of Locke incites rebellion among the younger boys.

A further consequence of corrupt or ineffective leadership highlighted by Adams is the growth of a culture opposed to the official ethos of the school, or what one Harminster master calls ‘counter-influences’ (Adams, 1861: 103). Witnesses to both the Public Schools and Schools Inquiry Commissions testified to the practice of drinking, smoking, gambling and breaking bounds by a minority of pupils. Further evidence of such illicit activity is provided by contemporary letters and memoirs. For example, in 1834 the poet Arthur Hugh Clough wrote to his brother George from Rugby that ‘even here there is a great deal of bad’ (1957: 7), going on to describe an incident of drunkenness. When George complained of much worse episodes at King William’s College, Clough observed, ‘Theft and drunkenness generally exist to a certain degree in every large school’ (11).

Sexual exploitation, reflecting in some respects the gendered inequalities expressed in the institution of fagging and the practice of mock marriage in some girls’ schools, also characterised the underworld of the public school. The moral state of Harrow in the 1850s, where ‘[e]very boy of good looks had a female name, and was recognised either as a public prostitute or as some bigger fellow’s “bitch” ’ (Symonds 1984: 94), has been described in considerable detail by the writer John Addington Symonds in his *Memoirs*. Writing of his experiences as a pupil at the school, he recalls the ‘animal lust’ revealed in such relationships, and observes: ‘My schoolfellows realised what I had read in Swift about the Yahoos’ (94).

In *Schoolboy Honour*, Adams describes the illicit activities of the Hexagon Club, formed by rebellious fifth-formers for drinking and playing pool and billiards at The Jolly Angler, ‘a low

public house' in Halminster (126). At its annual dinners, one boy explains, 'Every fellow there [is] more or less drunk.[...] As for the singing, they are regular flash songs, and everyone present is expected to sing one' (113). The 'revelling' was sometimes 'followed by scenes of even darker vice' (109). These activities are shown to be not only damaging to members themselves, but harmful to younger boys who fall under their influence. At Halminster this influence is exerted partly through the practice of 'taking-up' (104) in which an older boy will patronise a 'handsome' (106) younger one, 'and bestow on him privileges which set him above his own age and position' (104). In this text, the suave and graceful Charles Howard is represented as a particularly dangerous 'taker-up' of younger boys. Describing him as 'familiar with the worst pursuits of men four and five years older than himself' and as having 'explored the most fashionable labyrinths of London vice' (105), Adams strongly implies that his patronage first of Johnson, and then of Austen, is motivated by sexual exploitation. While Austen escapes his clutches, Johnson's school career is ruined when he returns to school drunk after a meeting of the Hexagon Club.

Although the influence of boys like Howard and his peers is represented as potentially ruinous for the younger pupils who succumb to their powers, Adams asserts that the confrontation with 'evil' can be a means of maturation for those able to resist it. In *Schoolboy Honour*, he assumes a didactic authorial voice to assure his readers that the trials of Halminster life, like those of the world at large, teach courage and self-reliance. Echoing Thomas Arnold, he explains: 'It is through the selfishness, the harshness, and the treachery of others that trials come to us, by which we are disciplined and perfected' (41). At the end of *The Boys of Westonbury*, Adams ascribes a similar view to Poole's great-uncle, who, speaking of the tribulations suffered by Poole, Oliver and Locke, comments, ' "At their age to have passed through such a trial so bravely and so rightly, cannot but be of incalculable advantage

to the formation of their characters” ’ (371). He makes it clear that this does not justify the wrongs that the three boys have endured, but rather that the experience has helped to prepare them for the rigours of adult life.

Conclusions

Schools in nineteenth-century fiction are represented primarily as places where both boys and girls are sent to undergo a process of socialisation which will prepare them for gender-specific adult roles. In establishments consciously modelled on the private household, girls ideally imbibe values and learn skills which will equip them to be good wives and mothers. In larger, more structured institutions, boys are trained for responsible citizenship in the wider world of which the school is seen as a microcosm. As Holt argues, to some extent fiction is used to show how schools may be effective in providing pupils with opportunities to practise conventional adult roles. Thus texts such as Hooper’s *Mrs Anderson’s School* and Melly’s *School Experiences of a Fag* focus closely on the structures and relationships through which the protagonist is successfully taught to fulfil prevailing ideals of femininity and masculinity, and in so doing provide an exemplar for readers.

As Holt also shows, much fiction demonstrates the failure of many schools to prepare their pupils for adulthood, and the capacity of some to render their pupils unfit for citizenship. In a period of extensive questioning and scrutiny of current educational ideology and practice, it goes far beyond the validation of current educational ideals to engage with public debate and so to expose many shortcomings in the schooling of both boys and girls.

At one level, much school fiction addresses a number of the issues raised in the contemporary press and investigated by the Clarendon and Taunton Commissions, showing how practices justified as facilitating the process of induction into adult roles have negative as

well as positive consequences. For example, Adams explicitly attacks bullying, fagging and flogging, all abuses identified and debated in the public domain. Similarly, Mayhew shows how the learning of the role of 'mother' in girls' schools is exploitative where older pupils rather than teachers are expected to supervise and care for younger ones.

At another level, fiction is also used to question the ideals implicit in the models underpinning these practices. Gender expectations in boys' schools, such as those portrayed by Adams, lead to the toleration of brutality. In girls' schools, the enforcement of female roles limits the potential for personal growth, and reinforces acceptance of inequality between the sexes. The ideals are also often depicted as unrealisable in practice. In the case of girls' schools, both peer relationships and the exercise of authority by adults are portrayed by writers such as Sherwood and Mayhew as falling short of those characteristic of a natural family. In schools for boys, the principle of self-government is shown to rest on the assumption that those chosen to lead will have appropriate skills and use them responsibly. However, because it is unregulated, power may be abused, particularly where authority is enforced by the use of physical punishment and violence is seen to be legitimised. Adams shows clearly how governance by the weak or vicious leads not only to the oppression of individuals, but also to divisions in the pupil body, and even to rebellion. Further, it allows the growth of an 'underclass' which establishes an alternative hierarchy and means of influence. In girls' schools too, the emergence of a subversive 'party' is shown to have the potential to pressurise law-abiding pupils into wrong-doing. While such influences are shown to help some pupils to recognise and overcome evils which they will encounter in the wider world, they are also identified as the means by which a boy or girl is corrupted and made unfit for responsible adult life.

It is clear that writers of school fiction challenge many of the conventions of contemporary school life, identifying and exploring weaknesses in current models of education. However, in doing so, authors of the girls' stories in the corpus I have identified to date do not generally investigate alternative approaches to schooling, such as those exemplified by the larger, more academic schools which often grew out of small, family-style establishments. In contrast, writers of boys' stories more frequently suggest improvements or reforms to the systems they criticise, as Adams does in *The Boys of Westonbury* - Holt indeed suggests that a key function of public school stories was to campaign for changes in the system. As I have argued in this chapter, many of the reforms advocated in fiction relate to the ways in which schools provided both formal and informal structures to prepare pupils socially for the roles and responsibilities of adult life. However, these roles were also shaped by ideals of physical fitness and intellectual proficiency in the case of boys, and by concepts of beauty and cultural accomplishment in that of girls. In my next chapter I shall therefore focus on attitudes to provision for health and physical education in both fiction and non-fiction, and discuss the contribution of such provision to pupils' social and moral development. I shall follow this with a chapter examining the literary and extra-literary treatment of the curriculum, and its impact on the definition and reinforcement of gender roles.

Chapter 4

‘In Sickness and in Health’: the body at school

‘[H]e doesn’t look as we should like to see him’, comments Doctor Arnold when 13-year-old George Arthur, ‘a slight pale boy’ arrives at Rugby in Hughes’ *Tom Brown’s School Days* (1857). ‘He wants some Rugby air and cricket’ (221). Accordingly Arnold assigns Arthur to the care of the robust Tom Brown, whose principal aim at school is ‘to be A1 at cricket and football’ (313). Under his tutelage, Arthur learns to swim, climb, run and enjoy games. His improved constitution enables him to survive a debilitating fever, a feat which he attributes entirely to Tom’s training. By the time he leaves Rugby, ‘his figure, though slight, is well-knit and active’ (351), and he has become a proficient enough cricketer to earn a coveted place in the school eleven. Physically, Tom has profited even more from his application to sport. Now ‘a young man nineteen years old’ and captain of the team, he is depicted as ‘a strapping figure, near six feet high, with ruddy tanned face and whiskers’ (351), eager to seek his ‘work in the world’ (363).

Hughes’ portrayal of Tom Brown’s career at Rugby is framed by descriptions of football and cricket matches and interspersed with accounts of multifarious outdoor pursuits. The cultivation of the body and concern for physical health and fitness are central to the ideals of manliness he expresses both in this text, and in the advice he dispensed to boys and young men in lectures and the periodical press. For example, in *Notes for Boys (and Their Fathers) on Morals, Mind and Manners* (1885), Hughes states, ‘Without health there is no real enjoyment of life’ (143) and outlines in some detail the essentials of healthy living, concluding that ‘nothing more effectually promotes and maintains soundness of body than manly sports and exercises’ (165). Nevertheless, Hughes is concerned to demonstrate that the cultivation of

physical strength should not be an end in itself, but serve as a tool for the development of intellectual, moral and social faculties. In *Notes for Boys* he asserts, ‘The education of the body is an important element in the training of the mind. “A sound mind in a sound body” is a sound maxim’ (165). He goes on to illustrate this principle with a discussion of the capacity of cricket to teach ‘patience, endurance, courage, perseverance, resignation, and a good many other virtues’ (168). Earlier, in *Tom Brown*, he shows how Tom’s moral as well as his physical growth is fostered on the cricket pitch, where he learns ‘discipline’ and a sense of teamwork (355) in addition to ‘pluck.’ It is his courage and self-control as much as his muscle which are shown to be crucial in the defeat of his adversaries Flashman and Slogger Williams.⁸³ More significantly, Hughes uses the developing friendship between Tom and Arthur to exemplify the interdependence of body, mind and spirit. In giving Tom responsibility for the new boy, Dr Arnold intends not only that he will help Arthur to gain in health and physical strength, but also, as indicated in Chapter 1, that Tom himself will ‘get manliness and thoughtfulness’ (365) from his association with Arthur, and this in fact proves to be the case. Gradually, Tom develops an ‘inner life’ (333), improving both mentally and morally. ‘You can’t think what I owe him’ (358), he observes on his last day at school. Commenting on the relationship, Claudia Nelson stresses, ‘The friendship between the two boys may have saved Arthur’s life by encouraging him to strengthen his body, but more importantly, it has saved Tom’s soul’ (1991: 44). As George Worth notes, the concept of ‘manliness’ as delineated by Hughes in this text ‘goes beyond mere bodily strength and athletic prowess’ (1985: 310), embracing moral as

⁸³ Although older and bigger than Tom, both are characterised as lacking in self-discipline, being unfit from ‘too much tuck’ (290) as well as from lack of exercise. Flashman’s eventual downfall is brought about by over-indulgence in beer and gin-punch.

well as physical courage, and giving value to the qualities of unselfishness, loyalty to conscience and dedication to duty.

Hughes' focus on the body as an instrument as well as an object of schooling, and on the relationship between physical well-being and moral, social and intellectual development, epitomises concerns which occupy a central place in both the school fiction and the extra-literary educational writings of the period. My aim in this chapter is to consider ways in which stories for both boys and girls address these issues, particularly through their treatment of the contribution to schooling of games and physical exercise, and their consideration of broader questions relating to health and sickness. Given the wide variations in fictional approaches, I shall also assess the extent to which they modify and question some of the assumptions underlying contemporary thinking about the body and its relationship to the moral and spiritual formation of the child.

Ideals of physical health

The notion that physical health was fundamental to the achievement of individual excellence permeated nineteenth-century thinking about human nature. As Bruce Haley points out in his study *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (1978),

in one way or another [the Victorians] all thought physiologically: they adopted the well-knit body as their model for the well-formed mind, and the mind-body harmony as their model for spiritual health, the harmony of the self with external principles of growth and order. Total health or wholeness – *mens sana in corpore sano* – was a dominant concept for the Victorians [...] in shaping thought about human growth and conduct. (4)

Haley attributes the increasing prominence given to issues of physical health at least in part to the prevalence of contagious disease caused by overcrowding and insanitary conditions in the rapidly expanding industrial cities, and manifested most alarmingly in the epidemics of

cholera, influenza, typhus and typhoid which swept Britain in the 1830s and 1840s.⁸⁴ On one level, the pursuit of health was perceived as a duty, and Haley quotes Herbert Spencer's belief 'that all breaches of the laws of health are *physical sins*' (17)⁸⁵ which not only undermine the strength of the individual, but also lead to the deterioration of society as a whole. Further, though, Haley relates preoccupation with bodily well-being to the emergence of physiology as a discrete science, and to the development of psychological approaches to medicine which stressed the interdependence of mind and body. Thus he emphasises that Spencer, while urging parents and teachers to give priority to the pursuit of 'vigorous health' (1911:12), constantly drew attention to the fact that 'the physical underlies the mental' (152), and called for a careful balance between physical and intellectual education. He goes on to examine the ways in which other nineteenth-century thinkers, including Thomas Carlyle, John Henry Newman and Charles Kingsley, defined the place of the cultivation of the body in the overall achievement of a human wholeness which integrates physical with moral, spiritual and mental health. Kingsley, for example, characterised health as 'harmony and sympathy, proportion and grace, in every faculty of mind and body' (1874: 340), and stressed that 'healthy bodies are the only trustworthy organs for healthy minds' (11). Like Spencer, he advocated a system of education in which physical and intellectual development are valued equally. The importance of games and athletic pursuits and their contribution to both bodily and spiritual well-being are emphasised in Kingsley's addresses to boys and young men as well as in his lectures to adult audiences. 'Be manly, boys', he urged the pupils at his son's preparatory school. 'Play well,

⁸⁴ For a detailed survey of conditions in the cities see E. Chadwick, *Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain* [1842], ed. M.W. Flinn (1965). A.S. Wohl's *Endangered Lives: Public Health in Victorian Britain*, (1983) provides a comprehensive secondary overview.

⁸⁵ The quotation comes from Spencer's *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical* (1861), reprinted in *Essays on Education and Kindred Subjects* (London: Dent, 1911): 152.

and, above all, work well; work heartily and play heartily. When you go home follow your sports wherever you may be' (1912: 6).⁸⁶ The notion that participation in athletic pursuits promoted moral as well as bodily well-being was dubbed 'muscular Christianity' by critics of both Kingsley's early novel *Two Years Ago* (1856) and *Tom Brown*, and was subsequently used widely to denote a concept of masculinity which combined physical strength and ethical maturity.⁸⁷

Changing approaches to physical education in schools for boys

The nineteenth-century preoccupation with bodily health and its contribution to mental, moral and social well-being meant that the overall place of physical education in the schooling of both boys and girls received growing attention as the century progressed. Historians of the growth of athleticism in boys' schools, notably J.A. Mangan and T.J.L. Chandler, point out that while unsupervised play and sporting activities had traditionally occupied the free time of pupils in many boys' schools, it was not until the 1850s that games began to be formally organised and to be incorporated into the curriculum. Mangan (1981) identifies several reasons for this development.

Concern for health was clearly one element, epitomised in Hely Hutchinson Almond's introduction of a strenuous programme of twice-daily physical exercise at Loretto.⁸⁸ While

⁸⁶ The notes of this address, delivered to the boys of Winton House School, Winchester, when his youngest son Grenville was a pupil there between 1867 and 1872, were published as *Words of Advice to School-Boys*, Ed. E.F. Johns (1911).

⁸⁷ In his *Sinews of the Spirit* (Press, 1985), Norman Vance prefers to use the term 'Christian manliness' to denote an ideal which embraced both 'physical and moral strength and maturity' (p.10), arguing that the concept of 'muscular Christianity' placed more emphasis on the 'muscular' than on the 'Christian.'

⁸⁸ His reforms are described in detail by Mangan in *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (1981): 49-58. Deeply influenced by the writings of Spencer and the Scottish gymnast Archibald MacLaren, Almond gave priority in his scheme of education to the cultivation of 'the powerful frame, and the ruddy glow and the buoyant energies of health' (53).

most schools did not give quite the same priority to athletic pursuits, a general growth in provision for games was seen to be having a positive effect on boys' health. In 1864 the Public Schools Commissioners observed:

It is chiefly, no doubt, to the habits of hardy exercise which are encouraged everywhere that we have to attribute the fact, that [...] sickness appears to be rare everywhere and the general health of the boys to be good. (PSC vol. 1: 50)

The Commissioners noted too that games served other purposes besides the promotion of health, commenting: 'The cricket and foot-ball fields [...] are not merely places of exercise and amusement; they help to form some of the most valuable social qualities and manly virtues' (I: 40).⁸⁹ In some schools, organised games were introduced as a deliberate strategy for combating unruliness among pupils. At Marlborough, for instance, Mangan describes how the calculated promotion of team sports during the headship of G.E.L. Cotton broke the 'cycle of repression, resentment and retaliation' (2010: 49) which had culminated in the 'Great Rebellion' of 1851. By the time Frederic Farrar succeeded to the headship in 1871, games had become a recognised vehicle of social and moral training. Although Farrar himself gave much greater weight than his predecessors to academic work, he had no hesitation in underlining to pupils the capacity of sport to foster such important qualities as self-control, diligence and tenaciousness, all of which he regarded as essential 'in the great cricket-field of life' (Farrar 1876: 373).

The growing understanding of the relationship between physical and mental and moral health also informed the development of a more holistic curriculum in which sporting and athletic activities were increasingly recognised as providing an antidote to the strains of intellectual study, and thus contributing to the formation of a rounded character. Mangan

⁸⁹ At Eton, for example, they were told that among the moral benefits bestowed by games was their provision of 'an antidote to luxurious and extravagant habits, to drinking, and to vice of all kinds' (PSC vol. I: 97).

demonstrates how Thring's endorsement of the development of sport and gymnastics at Uppingham, for example, was rooted in the conviction that 'life is one piece, and that each good helps all other good; health of intellect, health of body, health of heart, all uniting to form the true man' (1864: 33).

Mangan's focus is on large public schools, most of which had ample space for sport. Facilities for physical education were usually more limited in the smaller grammar and private schools. However, the findings of the Schools Inquiry Commissioners show that most were able to make some provision for games. In a survey of 130 London schools, Assistant Commissioner D.J. Fearon found that the great majority offered at least four sporting activities, including cricket, football, fives, archery, rowing, hockey, swimming, athletics, such as fencing, boxing, wrestling and jumping, and drill. Indeed, even in the 1860s games were deemed to absorb too much time in some schools.⁹⁰ By 1880 the schoolmaster Edward Lyttleton, himself a distinguished cricketer, was writing of 'the unruly growth of athleticism' (*Nineteenth Century* January 1880: 56) in the public schools, and warning of the threat posed by the burgeoning cult status of sport to academic standards and the exercise of legitimate authority.

Healthy bodies and healthy minds in boys' fiction

Organised games and other outdoor activities feature in virtually every boys' school story of this period. Cricket and football matches are central to the narratives of Henry Adams, for instance, while sports including boating, athletics and hunting with beagles define the seasons

⁹⁰ Reporting on boys' schools in Norfolk, Assistant Commissioner J.L. Hammond observed: 'The endowed classical schools especially appear to have adopted the muscular theories of the day, and may be trusted to prepare boys for University distinction in athletic, if not in academic exercises' (SIC vol. VIII: 353).

at Charles Johnstone's fictionalised Eton. Endorsing the contemporary ideal of the healthy mind in a healthy body, a number of writers use fiction to highlight the particular contribution made by athletic pursuits both to individual well-being, and to the establishment and maintenance of corporate social and moral codes. For example, both Sinclair's *Frank Vansittart* (1853) and Farrar's *St Winifred's* (1862) demonstrate the ways in which balancing academic work with outdoor exercise ensures the health and happiness of the protagonist. The part played by team games in promoting co-operation and group loyalty among pupils of differing ages and temperaments is emphasised in Fitzgerald's *School Days at Saxonhurst* (1867) as well as in Adams' *Barford Bridge* (1868) and Hughes' *Tom Brown* (1857).

William H.G. Kingston is one writer who makes games, and their contribution to the formation of a strong physique and upright, manly character, a major centre of interest in his school fiction. Best known as the author of numerous sea stories, he uses his two school novels to promote the culture of athleticism which shapes the sturdy, spirited heroes of works such as *The Three Midshipmen* (1862) and its sequels.

In *Digby Heathcote* (1860), Kingston focuses on the socialising effects of games, and their place in the creation of an orderly community. The school at the centre of this story is Mr Sanford's academy for young gentlemen at Grangewood House, an establishment which the protagonist experiences as chaotic when he first arrives. Entering the playground, 'all he could see was a confused mass of fellows rushing about, hallooing, and shouting' (286). The scene serves as a vivid image of life at the school, where the pupils are undisciplined, the ushers brutal and the housekeeper frugal and ill-tempered. The headmaster is in poor health and too weak to exercise any authority. Brought up to be 'a Christian and a gentleman' (276), Digby rapidly identifies with the 'right-thinking boys' (301) who oppose the culture of bullying and illicit drinking which has become established among 'a good number of big fellows' (339). To

compensate for the lack of formal games at Grangewood House, Digby and his friends devote their leisure time to organising activities such as Prisoners' Base and cross-country Follow-my-leader. Kingston deliberately contrasts the time these boys spend 'in health and strength-gaining exercise' (339) with that dissipated by the 'miserable, ignorant fools' in 'smoking, and drinking, and talking, as they called it, like men' (339). However, he represents the playing of games not only as a means of cultivating physical and moral well-being, but also as a vehicle for fostering the skills and values he sees as essential to the building up of a unified and disciplined society. He shows how the zest and skill that Digby brings to all sports quickly win him the respect and trust of most of the other boys, ensuring his rapid integration into the school community and enabling him to grow into 'the best and most plucky leader' (345) in games that it has ever had.

Kingston goes on to show how the leadership skills which Digby has developed on the playing field prove crucial to the reform of Grangewood House. When the pupils eventually revolt against Mr. Sanford's régime, Digby is initially swayed by the strength of opinion in the school and joins the 'barring-out'. Nevertheless, when the rebels' resistance begins to weaken, it is he who proposes a dignified surrender and volunteers to make representations to the headmaster on behalf of the whole school. To his astonishment, the rebellion has forced Mr Sanford's resignation. Dr Graham, his successor, listens sympathetically to the boys' grievances and explains to them his own philosophy of education. This involves devoting 'all his time and thoughts not only to the mental instruction of his boys, but to making them religious, and happy, and healthy' (423). To achieve this end, he puts games on a formal footing, introduces boating and swimming, supplies gymnastic apparatus, and ensures that the pupils' leisure time is supervised. As a result, order is brought to the school and the boys are much happier than before. Digby's influence grows as he continues to take a leading role in all

games and sports, while also studying diligently. Ultimately his qualities of leadership and his ‘honest, courageous, straightforward character’ (429) gain him the position of head of the school.

The eponymous hero of *Ernest Bracebridge* (1860) also becomes head boy after an unblemished career at Grafton Hall, ‘a first-rate gentleman’s school’ (2), whose head, like Dr Graham, firmly believes in cultivating the body as well as the mind. Kingston describes the many sports and ‘athletic exercises’ pursued at the school in some detail, and ascribes the good relationships amongst the boys to the variety of physical activities they enjoy. He notes that boxing, in particular, helps them to channel aggression and so acts as an antidote to quarrelling. However, in this text, Kingston is less concerned with the place of sport in sustaining community than with its contribution to the development of individual character. In particular, he indicates that it helps to cultivate the attributes of masculinity which he considers essential to success in ‘the earnest struggle of life’ (1). The combative nature of that struggle is repeatedly conveyed in imagery derived from warfare. For example, speaking of the ‘irregularities and disorders’ (164) to be found in society at large as well as in the school, Dr Graham tells his pupils:

‘You are sent into this world to fight against them, to overcome them, to strive with Satan [...] with all your might and main. It is a glorious contest; it is worth living for; [...] The knights who went out, as we are told of old, armed *cap-à-pie* to do battle with enchanters, and dragons, and monsters of all sorts, had not half so glorious, so difficult, so perilous a contest to engage in’. (164-5)

The games which train them for this fight are described in similar terms. A hockey match is ‘a battle’ (180) in which the opposing sides are ‘troops’ (259), the hockey sticks ‘formidable weapons’ (175) and the winning team ‘conquerors’ (179). Observing the proficiency with which Ernest manages and motivates other boys on the pitch, one master observes, ‘Ah! That

boy was born to become a general' (138). Kingston makes it clear that the skills and principles honed on the playing field do indeed ensure Ernest's success in his subsequent military career as well as at school.

Kingston's promotion of quasi-military masculine attributes is accentuated further by the introduction of a character who initially lacks all the qualities displayed by Ernest. The only child of over-protective parents, Edward Ellis is small for his age, awkward in demeanour and melancholy in outlook. On arrival at Grafton Hall he quickly becomes a target for Blackall, the school bully. As Ellis's self-appointed champion, Ernest urges him to take up games in order both to build up his physical strength, and learn to mix with his schoolfellows. One game of rounders gives him new confidence: '[he] felt a new spirit rising in him – powers he had never dreamed of possessing coming out. He might yet stand on equal terms with his companions at school and with his fellow-men in the world' (59). On Ernest's advice, he then takes up fencing and drilling. As a result,

[t]he greatest possible change was worked in Ellis. He no longer looked like the same boy. The alteration in his appearance was almost as striking as that which takes place in a country clown caught by a recruiting sergeant [...] and turned into the trim, active, intelligent soldier (114-5)

As his bodily strength increases, Ellis grows in moral courage too. Although he continues to encounter many challenges at school, he learns to meet them with equanimity and courage, risking his life to save a friend from drowning, and bravely enduring a lengthy period of unpopularity when false rumours about his honesty circulate among his schoolfellows. With Ernest, he leaves Grafton Hall ready to serve as an officer in the Indian Army. There, during the Mutiny, he is able to repay his debt to his friend by nursing him back to health when he is wounded in battle, and the two go on to fight side by side in the service of Queen and country.

Drawing on the ideals of muscular Christianity promoted in the novels of Kingsley and Hughes, Kingston depicts a world in which physical health and strength invariably signify moral virtue. Athletic boys, like Digby and Ernest, are the ones who exercise the greatest influence for good in the school and go on to pursue successful careers. Delicate and nervous boys, like Ellis, must overcome their weakness and earn respect through application to sport. In contrast, those who shun exercise and smoke, drink and over-eat ruin their constitutions and frequently come to a shameful end. It is a simplistic picture, which recurs in other school fiction of the period, notably in the stories of Henry Adams, where games are portrayed as a principal agent of socialisation and not infrequently provide the means by which boys of dubious character are reformed.⁹¹ However, in other texts the concept of a clear-cut correlation between bodily strength and moral virtue is subjected to considerable scrutiny. By accentuating the violence inherent in many sporting activities, and highlighting the positive moral influence exerted by boys who are physically weak, a number of writers use fiction to call into question some of the assumptions underlying the cult of games which were accepted uncritically by Kingston and others, and identify alternative means of attaining moral and spiritual maturity.

Muscular Christianity under scrutiny

Samuel Bracebridge Hemyng, best known for the serial stories⁹² he wrote for the juvenile ‘penny dreadful’ market from 1868 onwards, was also the author of two novels set at Eton.

Written only a few years after he left the school himself, *Eton School Days* (1864) and *Butler*

⁹¹ For example in *Barford Bridge; or, School-boy Trials* (1868), involvement in team sports teaches the arrogant protagonist to play for others rather than for individual distinction.

⁹² His most notable contributions featured the sensational adventures of Jack Harkaway. The first of these, *Jack Harkaway's School Days* (1880), is set in a boys' boarding school.

Burke at Eton (1865) depict the institution much as the Clarendon Commission found it, a place where more importance is attached to games than to scholarship, and ‘the captain of the boats is the greatest man in the school’ (PSC vol. I: 97). Hemyng’s decision to set his stories in an identifiable institution renowned at the time both for its adulation of sporting prowess and for its neglect of intellectual and moral education allows him to engage directly with current debate about conditions in the public schools,⁹³ and enables him convincingly to question the practices and values engendered by the cult of muscularity.

In the first of the two stories, Butler Burke, explicitly described by Hemyng as ‘a believer in muscular Christianity, after the creed of Kingsley’ (1864: 230), arrives at Eton determined to excel on the river as well as to indulge his enthusiasm for football. Strong and well-built, he demonstrates his physical prowess from the outset, striking another boy with a cricket stump and rendering him unconscious on his very first day. He continues to establish himself with his peers through using his fists and displaying remarkable ‘pluck’ on the football field. There the excessive violence of play not only leaves most participants bruised and bleeding, but also results in a broken leg for his less robust cousin Reginald Purefoy. The antithesis of Burke, Reginald’s facial resemblance to ‘one of Murillo’s *Matres Dolorosae*’ (4) and his taste for pretty furnishings have earned him the nickname ‘Miss Purefoy’ (58). Nevertheless, Burke’s muscular superiority is of no avail when he is unjustly accused of theft. It is left to the ‘clever, but slightly effeminate’ (7) Purefoy to solve the mystery and persuade the real culprit to own up. Purefoy also intervenes when Burke falls under the spell of the fascinating but degenerate Chorley and begins to drink and smoke, successfully convincing him that his idol ‘was not so

⁹³Widespread public concern about physical conditions at Eton, and the school’s emphasis on games at the expense of academic training, helped to provide the incentive for the setting up of the Public Schools Commission in 1862. See for example the three letters written to the *Cornhill Magazine* between May 1860 and March 1861 by M.J. Higgins under the pseudonym ‘Paterfamilias’.

perfect either in construction or material as he had fondly supposed' (73). Hemyng uses both these incidents very effectively to challenge the notion that moral strength is incompatible with physical weakness. In the character of Purefoy, he shows how a delicate, studious boy who cares little for games is able to convey values of honesty and self-respect through the use of rational argument and example rather than the exercise of force.

The limitations of a value system based principally on physical strength are explored further in Hemyng's second story, *Butler Burke at Eton*. Central to the narrative is an outbreak of scarlet fever which sweeps through the school. Burke is devastated when Childe Martin, a younger pupil whom he has befriended, catches the disease. Martin, who is described as 'a thin, pale little fellow, with what may aptly be termed a spiritual face' (8), has touched Burke with his vulnerability and gentle piety, and he feels genuine pity for the boy. In addition, Martin's illness forces Burke for the first time to acknowledge the transience of human life, and to confront the inevitability of death. Martin's removal to the sanatorium leaves him in pensive mood.

Burke [...] sought his room, feeling more oppressed than he had ever remembered being at any period of his life. It was so inexplicable that Childe Martin, who had been so strong and healthy a day or two before, should be stricken down in this awfully sudden manner. He had been taken from among his companions, and taken perhaps to die, who should say? The ways of Providence are inscrutable [...]; and supposing that the soil of the churchyard should cover his head, who might be the next? (232)

Once again, it is the reflective Purefoy who helps him to deal with his feelings. Whilst acknowledging that the death of a child is 'not a nice prospect,' and even, in Burke's terms, is 'shocking' (233), he suggests that boys, being 'thinking, reasoning beings' (233), are as capable as adults of examining their lives and preparing for death. Sensing that he will be the next victim of the fever, Burke is encouraged to escape the heartless banter of his peers and,

unusually, finds consolation in reading his Bible. Thus he is to some extent enabled to deal emotionally with his own sickness and with the expected demise of Martin.

Burke makes a full recovery from his illness, going on to distinguish himself on the cricket pitch as well as the river. Nevertheless, his own suffering and Martin's rapid decline and death lead him to consider 'the rough and stormy existence of Eton' (135) in the context of what the younger boy terms 'the long hereafter' (239), and to recognise the importance of living a good life as well as an energetic one. Jenny Holt has described Burke's development in these two texts as a progression 'from fighting boy into thinking adult' (2008:134), emphasising that his growth is facilitated by the delicate and 'girlish' (1865: 135) Martin and the bookish Purefoy rather than by his more muscular peers. In emphasising the moral and spiritual influence exerted by boys who are physically weak, Hemyng effectively calls into question the correlation between bodily strength and moral maturity which underpins the ideal of 'muscular Christianity' to which the young Burke blithely subscribes.

***Frank Netherton; or, the Talisman* (1851) and the perfection of strength in weakness**

In Butler Burke, Hemyng depicts the evolution of a strong, athletic protagonist who grows spiritually and morally as a result of the influence and example of two boys who lack physical strength. Other writers challenge the athletic ideal by making a delicate central character a model of moral courage and spiritual maturity. The anonymous *Frank Netherton* is typical of a significant group of about twenty-five texts, including Annie Geary's *Sidney Grey* (1857), Sophie Prosser's *Ludovic; or The Boy's Victory* (1867) and Adams' *Walter's Friend* (1873), which feature a physically weak but morally robust protagonist who not only learns from his own physical limitations, but exploits them to provide a pattern for his peers. Motherless from birth, Frank is 'not strong and healthy like other children' (10). Believing that 'one may do

something better than play cricket' (96), his father has brought him up to prefer reading to games. When an aunt comes to take charge of the household, she is shocked at Frank's pallor and small size. Immediately prescribing a pony, fresh air and exercise, she also decides that Frank should be sent to Mr Campbell's school with his cousin Frederick, 'a fine, active, high-spirited boy' (24). She explains:

'It will be good both for his mind and body to associate for a time with other boys, and learn to act as well as think for himself; and to join not only in their studies, but in their sports. It is not enough to be wise and learned; we must also be useful and active – men and boys more especially'. (28)

Because Frank 'understands nothing of cricket, and cannot even play foot-ball' (31), Frederick fears that he himself will suffer considerable loss of face if, as seems inevitable, his cousin is 'quizzed' and branded 'a girl' by his schoolfellows and makes it clear that Frank cannot count on him to fight his battles for him. Hence from the outset, Frederick's sporting prowess and bodily vigour are shown to mask moral weakness rather than to denote strength of character. In contrast, Frank's physical frailty is depicted as hiding an intrepid spirit. Described as 'singularly fearless both in mind and body' (25), he declares himself perfectly capable of standing on his own feet. Once at school, he demonstrates his courage by persevering at cricket when the effort exhausts him and Frederick and the other boys laugh at his lack of skill. They also jeer and dub him a 'Methodist' when they see him reading his Bible. Undeterred, he takes the book as his 'talisman', and strives to apply its teaching in his daily life. Consequently he is the only boy prepared to show kindness to a boy who is constantly in trouble, and to oppose the tyrannical conduct of Doyle, the school bully.

The effects of Frank's preparedness to stand by his own principles are shown in the influence he begins to exert over some of the other boys. Most significantly, his refusal to reveal the identity of the boy who deals him a life-threatening blow, and his patience during

the illness that ensues, impresses all the boys, who come to regard him as something of a hero. Frank's readiness to forgive his assailant moves the older boy to repentance, and the two become friends. Frederick too is shamed into examining his own behaviour towards his cousin, and begins to treat him with greater sympathy. Later, he remembers Frank's example and refrains from divulging another boy's secret. Frank's own loyalty to his creed is tested further when Rushton, a disagreeable boy who has consistently ridiculed his Bible-reading, allows him to be blamed for a theft he has committed himself. When Rushton is seriously injured in a fall, Frank intuitively sympathises with his suffering. To the astonishment of the other boys, he visits Rushton often, armed with his talisman, and sees him gradually become 'a different boy' (176). Ultimately Rushton has the courage to own up to his misdeeds in front of the whole school, earning the pardon and respect of staff and pupils alike.

Although he never becomes proficient at cricket, Frank Netherton does improve in stature and complexion during his time at school, much to his aunt's delight. However, the author's concern in this text is with the redemptive rather than the muscular aspects of Christianity. Thus he focuses principally on Frank's spiritual and moral growth, and this is shown to be advanced by his experience of physical weakness, and particularly of grave illness. Unlike Kingston's muscular heroes, he acquires the qualities of patience and fortitude through the endurance of suffering rather than through strenuous exercise. As a result, he is able to show empathy towards others who meet with misfortune at school and acquires deeper reserves of understanding through his care of Rushton. The transforming effect of his kindness on his former adversary, as well as on such boys as Hampton and Doyle, motivates a number of his peers to emulate him. His influence on his cousin is particularly marked. Frederick gradually learns to listen to his own conscience rather than to popular opinion, persisting in loyalty to a

friend rather than following the crowd, and displaying an independence of mind which team sports had failed to cultivate.

Physical health and the education of girls

Although most widely applied to boys' schooling, the ideals of physical health encapsulated in the work of Spencer and Kingsley were also relevant to the education of girls. In his theoretical writings, Kingsley applied the principle of the sound mind in a sound body to both sexes. In this he followed Spencer, who, deploring the 'feebleness' (1911: 136) engendered by restricted diet and lack of exercise in the lives of many girls, insisted that 'vociferous play' and 'bodily activity' (34) were as essential to their physical and mental health as they were to that of boys. Kingsley too was dismayed by the 'exceedingly small size of the average young woman' he saw in the streets of London, noting 'a general want of those large frames, which indicate usually a power of keeping strong and healthy not merely the muscles, but the brain itself' (1874: 38). Accordingly, he advocated a programme of physical training for girls 'analogous to our public school games' (42) for boys.

However, this view was strongly opposed, notably by some members of the medical profession who cited the differences in male and female physiology in support of their opinion. Justifying a clear differentiation between the education of boys and girls, the physician Henry Maudsley contended:

[I]t is not a mere question of larger or smaller muscles, but of the energy and power of endurance of the nerve-force which drives the intellectual and muscular machinery; not a question of two bodies and minds that are in equal physical conditions, but of one body and mind capable of sustained and regular hard labour, and of another body and mind which for one quarter of each month during the best years of life is more or less sick and unfit for hard work. (1874: 479-80)

In Maudsley's judgement, a girl's chief duty was to submit 'to the periodical tides of her organisation' (475) in order to ensure that her finite reserves of energy were spent in developing 'sexual completeness' and making her fit 'for the best discharge of maternal functions' (475).

Although Maudsley's views were strongly contested by feminist activists such as Elizabeth Garrett Anderson,⁹⁴ belief in innate female delicacy informs much of the advice given to girls in the mid-nineteenth century, distinguishing it clearly from that aimed at boys. For example, in both her advice books *Girlhood* (1869) and *Boyhood* (1870), the journalist Marianne Farningham emphasises to her readers the importance of maintaining health. However, because boys are expected to become 'fine stalwart men', she encourages them to take part in cricket, rowing, and other 'manly' sports, asserting,

All men, preachers, statesmen, authors, poets, whatever they may be, are better and nobler, and in every sense greater for the possession of healthy bodies and plenty of physical strength. So boys, while you are growing grow strong by every means in your power. (1870: 42)

In contrast, her advice in *Girlhood* proceeds from the assumption that girls are naturally delicate and focuses on the need to avoid 'taking cold' and running the risk of 'fevers and consumption' (67) rather than on the desirability of actively cultivating bodily strength. She devotes a whole chapter on 'Suffering Girls' to the lessons which may be learnt from illness. Stressing too the 'soberness of manner' (21) expected of women, she recommends no exercise beyond a daily walk.

However, more robust counsel was offered elsewhere. Although she accepted the prevailing belief that women were physically inferior to men, Sarah Stickney Ellis had no time for

⁹⁴ See for example her response to Maudsley's article, 'Sex in Mind and in Education: a Reply' in the *Fortnightly Review* (May 1874): 582-594.

affectations of delicacy. For example, in *The Daughters of England* (1842), she explicitly promotes an image of ‘the cheerful, active, healthy, and sound-minded girl’ (234) who walks or rides in all weathers, while simultaneously disparaging those girls who cultivate an air of ‘extreme delicacy [...] and languor’ (132) in order to gain attention or to appear attractive. In so doing, she acknowledges that her advice runs counter to contemporary notions of feminine beauty and the dictates of fashion. These, as Anna Krugovoy Silver demonstrates in her analysis of what she terms the ‘anorexic body’ in Victorian literature, laid particular emphasis on ‘beauty as woman’s special duty’ (2002: 29) and made the slender waist its principal hallmark. Many women and girls repressed their appetites and relied on tight corsets to achieve the ideal body type, frequently to the detriment of their health. Condemning such practices in 1880, Dr Joseph Farrar attributed ‘congestion and even inflammation of the lungs, congestion of the liver [...], palpitation and subsequent diseases of the heart, faintings, bronchitis, indigestion, jaundice, obstruction of the bowels’ all to ‘this folly of tight-lacing’ (1880: 205). He, like Ellis, argued that girls have it within their own power to cultivate a healthy constitution and recommended ‘plenty of out-door exercise’ (205), including rowing as well as walking and riding, as a means of remedying bodily weakness which was self-inflicted rather than innate.

Girls and physical education

In spite of such arguments in favour of encouraging exercise and sports for girls, most schools afforded few opportunities for such activities before the 1870s. Whereas Fearon’s survey of London boys’ schools revealed ample provision for games, his investigation of a hundred

private academies for girls showed that apart from the callisthenic exercises⁹⁵ used in thirty-three of them, physical education consisted of little beyond ‘walking abroad, croquet, or dancing’ (SIC vol. VII: 408). He deduced a direct relationship between the deficiencies in provision and the ‘frequent failures in health’ (389) suffered by many girls, showing how these led in turn to irregular school attendance and low academic attainment. His findings were replicated across the country, and corroborated by the evidence of individual witnesses, several of whom advocated the emulation of practices in boys’ schools. One Assistant Commissioner wrote: ‘If the professors of callisthenics would devise some games which would do for girls what cricket and football do for boys they would render a public service’ (SIC vol. IX: 299).

Some of the key evidence to the Commission was provided by headteachers of the new schools which were established from 1850 onwards precisely to give girls educational opportunities comparable to those for boys, physically as well as academically. Recognising that intellectual and bodily growth are inextricably connected, pioneers such as Frances Mary Buss and Dorothea Beale included compulsory callisthenic exercises in their curricula from the outset. At the North London Collegiate School swimming was introduced in the 1870s, and a gymnasium was provided when new premises were built in 1879, allowing pupils to organise indoor games, such as badminton and fives, as well as enabling the school to offer lessons in gymnastics. Similar programmes developed gradually in other girls’ schools founded after 1850, but progress was generally slow, with vigorous outdoor games such as

⁹⁵ These were gentle physical exercises designed to promote general fitness. Several Commissioners commented that in practice they were often little more than training in deportment, and failed to ‘supply the vigour and joyousness which belong to the free and healthy play of boys’ (SIC vol. IX: 299).

hockey and netball rarely introduced before the 1890s.⁹⁶ Kathleen McCrone attributes the cautiousness with which energetic sports were adopted to the ‘divided aims’ of the new schools. These demanded what she terms a ‘double conformity’ (1993: 39) to male academic standards on the one hand, and to female patterns of behaviour on the other. Programmes of physical training had to combine the promotion of health with the maintenance of propriety and the preservation of femininity.⁹⁷ McCrone concludes that although the nineteenth-century reformers of women’s education challenged traditional gender roles by developing intellectual training on the same lines as that given to boys, their faithfulness to prevailing ideals of femininity, and consequent acceptance of limited opportunities for sport, ‘confirmed the separate spheres of the sexes and the superiority of men’ (51).

‘Walking abroad, croquet or dancing’: schooling the body in fiction for girls

Thanks to the ambivalence in contemporary attitudes towards physical exercise for girls, and the slowness with which sporting activities developed even in the most progressive of the new schools, formal games and other outdoor pursuits are never a major focus in girls’ school stories of this period. It was not until the early years of the twentieth century that participation in team sports became a defining characteristic of what Sally Mitchell (1995) terms the ‘new

⁹⁶ For instance, while it offered a full programme of gymnastics, Cheltenham Ladies’ College did not rent a playing field until 1891, only then enabling girls first to play a form of hockey, and then cricket and tennis. Source: K. McCrone, *Playing the Game: Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870-1914* (1988): 82-3.

⁹⁷ The resulting tension is highlighted in the first paper published by the London Association of Schoolmistresses. Entitled ‘Physical Exercises and Recreation for Girls’ (1877), it endorses the importance of gymnastic and sporting activities for girls, and recommends practical ways in which schools could overcome the obstacles posed by limited resources and so improve their provision. At the same time, it identifies dress as a significant impediment to strenuous exercise, remarking, ‘For many kinds of active sport girls’ dress is very inconvenient. One does not quite see how this is to be got over, as it would not do for school girls to be dressed differently from other people’ (8-9).

girl' featured in the work of writers such as Dorothea Moore and Angela Brazil.⁹⁸

Nevertheless, most mid-nineteenth-century texts represent a modest range of physical activities as being important for pupils' health. Miss Lorimer, in the anonymous *Going to School, or Some Chapters from the Life of Isabella Gordon* (1853), is typical in her refusal to 'allow the girls to sit up beyond their usual time to study, nor would she let them omit taking a proper amount of exercise during the day, for she always made their health the primary consideration' (71). Walking in the garden or immediate neighbourhood, dancing, croquet and *les graces*⁹⁹ fulfil this requirement in many stories. Even the new fashion for bathing features uncontroversially in the 1880 novel *Captain Eva*. Significantly, apart from swimming, these are all activities which the Schools Inquiry Commissioners observed in practice as being consistent with feminine propriety and fashion, but as offering little scope for 'the genuine hearty play' (SIC vol. IX: 818) they advocated for girls.

Nevertheless, some fictional texts identify conflict between the need to provide even modest exercise and a concern for cultivating a feminine character and physique. In *Amy Carlton; or, First Days at School* (1856), D. Richmond describes the provision at Miss Coleman's London seminary as consisting of a daily walk in the park supplemented by regular dancing lessons with the exacting Mr Domville. However, the potential for even this modest exercise to enhance physical fitness is undermined by Miss Coleman's stipulation that all movement should be consistent with 'decorum'. On her first day at school, Amy is severely reproached for her 'unladylike' (49) movements when she runs to take a closer look at the ducks on the pond in the park. She fares no better in the dancing class, where she 'had to be fashioned into

⁹⁸ Brazil's first school story *The Fortunes of Philippa* (1906) states that the girls play 'cricket, hockey and all modern games' (53).

⁹⁹ A popular catching game played with hoops and rods, which was considered to encourage graceful posture.

the established mould, and head, feet, arms, hands, and figure had all to be turned and twisted into the proper form' (82). Miss Emily, the assistant governess, quickly decides to take Amy's deportment in hand:

Like the rest, she lay flat upon the floor for half an hour every day, and this was unpleasant to her at first; but Miss Emily soon began to complain of her lack of *tournure*, and at length compelled her to use the backboard every day, and Amy's patience nearly failed. It was not until long afterwards that she was grateful for what teased her so sadly now'. (82)

In emphasising Amy's eventual appreciation of Miss Emily's instruction, Richmond appears to be endorsing a programme of training which aimed to subdue physical energy and to force girls to adopt unnatural postures in the pursuit of elegance. Elsewhere, such practices are exposed as absurd, and as being detrimental to health. In the anonymous *Harriette Browne's School-Days* (1859), for example, the girls of Forester House devote themselves enthusiastically to callisthenic exercises for just a few weeks every year, 'hopping, dancing, and flourishing their arms in any spare corner of the rooms' (144) in order to prepare for the dancing master's ball. Some are exhausted by the unaccustomed exercise, and the writer denounces the 'great expenditure of muscular and mental effort' for a display she describes as 'senseless' (143). At the same time, several girls adopt various strategies for making themselves 'delicate' (148), with the result that two of them faint at the height of the festivities.

At Lawn Lodge, the second school featured in this text, the Principal Miss Plattford has no use for the terms 'genteel' and 'ladylike', allowing her girls to run in the garden as much as they please, and even organising competitive races with prizes for 'the swiftest of foot' (240). As a result, she boasts that there is not 'one phlegmatically fat, nor one fragile, consumptive-looking girl' (240) among her pupils. Unfortunately, Miss Plattford's reluctance to oversee

their activities, or to establish ground rules for play, leads to ‘confusion and insubordination in the school-room’ (281), and she is forced to close the school when a number of parents withdraw their daughters. Here, although strenuous exercise is shown to promote health, it is also portrayed as undirected and therefore uncondusive to the cultivation of the good manners and self-restraint necessary both to harmonious community living, and to the formation of a feminine character. Mrs Plattford’s approach to exercise is shown to be as unbalanced and unproductive as that adopted at Forester House. In highlighting the ways in which both schools engender a distorted expression of femininity, the author draws deliberate attention to the tensions and contradictions inherent in the endeavour to combine the promotion of health with the cultivation of a womanly character in girls’ schools.

Conflict between energetic physical activity and the cultivation of femininity is also parodied in Mayhew’s *Letters Left at the Pastrycook’s* (1853). Here, the girls of Princess’ College undergo military-style drilling of the kind popular in boys’ schools of the time. Captain March is described barking out orders in ‘a voice like a cannon’ (79), bellowing, ‘bu-u-ulge your chests, ladies!’ as they ‘march quick and slow’ (79) for a whole hour. As Kitty Clover intimates in a letter to her friend, the exercise does little to encourage a ladylike demeanour:

We have to wear a peculiar costume for drilling, not unlike a Bloomer’s. It is a short brown-Holland blouse, with a red belt. Our trousers are of the same material, but rather short, displaying our feet and ankles. We look so funny in it, and you would laugh to see us. We are placed in rows, and made to go through all imaginary steps and exercises, like so many militiamen. We should make a famous regiment [...] and if the French should ever invade us, we are ready to turn out to a man. (79)

Mayhew follows this account of drilling with a description of a lesson in deportment, in which Kitty is reprimanded for displaying her ankles when practising how to run in a shower of rain. By highlighting the contradictions implicit in an approach to physical education which

attempts to reconcile the cultivation of femininity with the provision of opportunities similar to those available to boys, he reveals the ‘divided aims’ referred to by McCrone.

The body as teacher in the school of pain

In addressing issues of physical education, the texts discussed above focus mainly on ways in which participation in exercise impacts on the cultivation of a feminine identity. The contribution of training in deportment to the formation of a ladylike demeanour and character is often considered alongside the place of appropriate physical activities in schooling. While recreational walking and dancing are depicted as beneficial to health, they are also shown by some writers to be offset by practices which, in conformity to prevailing ideals of gender and fashion, subject the body to a degree of abuse. The mental, ethical and social benefits of exercise which are given such primacy in the work of Kingsley and others are generally ignored in girls’ fiction, and physical health and strength are used only incidentally to signify moral and spiritual qualities. Almost certainly because it exemplifies conventional female virtues such as dependency and submissiveness, it is instead the weak female body which is most frequently used to denote moral strength, and to provide an exemplar of virtue.

The capacity of bodily frailty to edify both the subject of suffering and those who witness it is central to much nineteenth-century girls’ school fiction. In *Take Up Thy Bed and Walk* (2001), a study of the treatment of invalidity in several classic girls’ novels, Lois Keith notes that a significant proportion of texts published from 1850 onwards feature a protagonist who is disabled or suffering from an unspecified but debilitating illness. She argues that ‘the disability is primarily used as a metaphor for dependency and weakness, providing a time for reflection and learning’ (14), and shows how it becomes a catalyst either for the correction of the character’s moral faults, or for the redemption by example of another flawed individual.

Keith focuses mainly on books with a domestic setting, but her emphasis on the diseased or disabled body as a powerful instrument of learning is highly relevant to fiction set in schools. Almost all the texts which provide the focus for this study feature serious illness, accident or death.

Annie Gray's *Ailie Stuart* (1873) is typical of the many school stories which represent sickness as a medium for moral and spiritual education. It is set at Elsmore, a well-run boarding-school on the Cornish coast where the girls are given opportunities for 'every variety of out-door amusement' (12), including croquet, archery, and long rambles in the surrounding countryside. Among the pupils is Ethel Grant, an orphan and the baby of the school. Delicate from birth, her fragility marks her out from her healthy school-fellows, conveying a spiritual quality which makes a deep impression on the new girl, Ailie:

Ailie thought she had never seen a more lovely child. It was not only that the little oval face was pure and delicate as an infant's, and the soft, dark eyes with their long eyelashes beautiful with a rare beauty. It was the lovely, trustful spirit, which shone in every lineament, seeming to etherealise the whole countenance, that at once riveted the attention. (24)

Ailie quickly realises that Ethel's influence on the other girls is much stronger than that exerted by her more assertive peers. The wish to protect and care for her brings out the best in her room-mates, so that even the mischievous Louey Dalton develops patience and understanding through her association with the child. As her health declines, Ethel learns to accept her pain and weakness with composure, providing her friends with a pattern of fortitude and serenity. Refined by suffering, she is described as growing in 'holiness and purity' (154). Her unshakeable belief in a heaven where she will be reunited with her parents conveys itself to others, so that Louey in particular finds her own religious faith strengthened as she helps to nurse the invalid. At the same time, Ethel's illness and eventual death serve as a *memento mori*, giving all the girls what Gray calls 'their first insight into the solemnity and the reality of

life' (167). Sobered by the realisation that human life is transient, and that much of it is marked by sorrow and distress, Ethel's particular friends are motivated by her death to dedicate the use of their own health and strength to doing good to others.

Elsewhere in this novel, Gray uses the sickness of another pupil to endorse the concept of suffering as an instrument of moral reformation. Clarine Balducci, the only girl to have treated Ethel Grant unkindly, contracts a form of brain fever. Because Clarine has also been guilty of a number of malicious acts for which other girls have been held responsible, her illness is represented as being rooted in her own flawed moral character, and to a great extent deserved. Gray makes it clear that a cure can be brought about only through repentance and reformation, but Clarine appears initially to learn nothing from her ordeal. Even when the fever has abated, she suffers 'dreadful lassitude and despondency' (196). Despite the wrongs Clarine has done her, Ailie helps to nurse her and perceives her mental torment. Afraid that she 'might rise from her bed of sickness in as utter darkness as when she first lay down upon it' (201), she persists in her kindness, and through words and actions communicates Christian teachings about forgiveness. Slowly Clarine is roused from her despair, repents of her misdeeds, and gradually becomes 'a changed girl' (206-7). Gray stresses that she did not grow 'gentle and forgiving all at once' (207), but shows how, strengthened by the faith she has embraced in the moment of her greatest weakness, she fights valiantly to overcome her pride and vindictiveness. In her ardent desire to reform, she is depicted as shaming others into making right moral choices, and acting upon them.

Through the characterisation of Ethel and Clarine, Gray sets out to illustrate ways in which the experience of bodily weakness has the power to advance a child's moral and spiritual growth. In so doing, she does not refute the value of health or of the vitality and physical courage it may engender. She makes it clear that Ailie finds much of the strength to nurse

Clarine by joining her friends for long country walks, refreshing her mind as well as her body. On an excursion to the beach, both she and Louey show considerable daring and are designated as heroines when they risk injury to rescue Ethel from the rising tide.

Nevertheless, Gray gives particular validation to individual suffering by showing how it may prove a potent tool for enabling others to acquire qualities which she perceives as outweighing those associated with physical health and vigour. This is accomplished partly through example, so that Ethel is portrayed as a model of patience and courage to her school-fellows. More significantly, it is realised through the opportunities for nursing afforded first by Ethel's illness and then by Clarine's, enabling both Ailie and Louey to develop virtues of selflessness and compassion. Gray thus demonstrates the ability of sickness to serve as an instrument for eliciting and reinforcing qualities which were widely held in greater esteem than physical courage. In her study *The Sickroom in Victorian Fiction* (1994), Miriam Bailin argues that, for Evangelical Victorians, nursing was seen as a 'sanctified act' (11) which, in many novels, 'was repeatedly invoked to verify in a way no other activity apparently could the genuineness of one's affections, the essential goodness of one's character' (11). It is these attributes that Gray is particularly concerned to depict and to commend to her readers. She achieves this through a focus on two characters whose bodily frailty contrasts starkly with the health and vigour of their peers, yet conveys lessons which formal schooling cannot teach. While never criticising the educational provision at Elsmore, with its generous allocation of time for exercise and fresh air, Gray proposes that values fundamental to the formation of a character which is both feminine and Christian is more effectively attained in the sickroom than in the classroom and playground.

Conclusions

As the examination of representative texts reveals, nineteenth-century school fiction provides diverse and often conflicting perspectives on the place of the body in education. On one level, these reflect some of the contradictions in current thinking about the body and the role of physical education in schools. For example, contemporary understanding of the differences in male and female physiology underpins contrasting ideas of how accepted gender roles should be maintained through the schooling of the body. On one hand, Kingston's boys are shown to acquire manliness through the strenuous exercise provided by athletics and team sports. On the other, Richmond's girls are depicted as learning to subdue their physical energy, cultivating a ladylike demeanour through decorous walks in the park and painful lessons in deportment. Both writers implicitly affirm the role of schooling in training the body in conformity with divergent concepts of masculinity and femininity such as those expressed in the writings of Farningham and other propagators of advice for the young. However, other writers identify tensions and contradictions in these ideals. The writer of *Harriette Browne's School-Days*, for example, deliberately exposes some of the dangers and illogicalities contained in an approach to physical education for girls which is driven by fashionable ideals of femininity, whilst also denouncing a scheme which promotes health but undermines the development of a womanly character.

While Kingston and Richmond focus predominantly on the physical outcomes of the exercise they depict, school fiction more commonly focuses on the interaction of the body with the mind and spirit, exploring the relationship between physical, intellectual and moral development emphasised in so much contemporary educational theory. Hemyng's two stories of Eton life question a culture of athleticism which idealised violence and devalued academic pursuits. In the character of Butler Burke, he traces the growth of moral and aesthetic

sensibility in a boy who arrives at Eton with no ambition beyond proving his physical strength on the playing field, but who leaves having achieved health of mind as well as body. Tom Brown's career at Rugby follows a similar pattern. Games are shown to have played a part in this growth, particularly through teaching teamwork and unselfishness as well as qualities of endurance and physical courage. However, as Claudia Nelson suggests in her analysis of the place of athleticism in several nineteenth-century school stories, 'Moral strength, not physical strength, is the real issue' (1991:70), and she points out that such moral strength is frequently learnt from a character who is neither sporting nor physically robust.

The frail, sickly character, referred to by Nelson as 'the angel in the school', features in virtually every school story of this period, and provides a crucial means of defining the body as an instrument as well as an object of schooling. In sickness and injury, morally dubious characters such as Philip Rushton in *Frank Netherton* are given space to reflect on their shortcomings as well as the opportunity to acquire patience and fortitude in the face of suffering. Rushton's reformation, like that of Gray's Clarine Balducci, is then shown to have a profound effect on the rest of the school community. Children who are already virtuous, for example Hemyng's Childe Martin and Gray's Ethel Grant, similarly inspire others with their cheerful acceptance of pain. In their need for care, these invalids also awaken compassion and selflessness in their peers. It is significant that delicacy and sickness are shown to encourage these characteristics in both boys and girls, affirming the capacity of masculinity to embrace qualities which are more often associated with femininity.

In showing how bodily frailty may function as a stimulus for moral and spiritual growth, writers of school fiction repeatedly question the assumptions enshrined in the principle of *mens sana in corpore sano*, demonstrating that physical weakness is not inconsistent with moral strength. Many also go further, depicting the fragile body as providing a window on to

the world of the spirit. Descriptions of invalid children frequently invoke imagery associated with non-corporeal states. Ethel Grant is from the outset portrayed as ‘ethereal’ and, like Childe Martin, is explicitly compared to an angel. Such children are invested with considerable moral and spiritual authority. Thus on his sickbed, Frank Netherton expounds the scriptures to Howard, commending his ‘talisman’ as a source of guidance which can help his friend to avoid trouble by behaving more considerately to his peers. The dying Ethel instructs Louey in the doctrine of the atonement, effectively securing her religious conversion. In death itself ‘there shone in her face a look of more than earthly joy and ecstasy’ (166), reassuring her friends of the reality of heaven.

Deathbed scenes such as this strike present-day readers as sentimental, even mawkish. However, they illustrate a further function of the focus on sickness and disability in so much nineteenth-century children’s fiction. While the prevalence of disease led to a widespread preoccupation with the cultivation of bodily health, it also called for strategies to deal with the incidence of illness and death which characterised the lives of virtually all families. Writers such as Annie Gray set out to present bodily frailty and mortality in a positive light. Readers, like the characters depicted within the text, are assured that good can come out of affliction, and that death is simply the gateway to a better life. Such scenes also incorporate advice on how to live life in the light of the inevitability of death, and it can be argued that the sympathy engendered by their portrayal of suffering serves to make readers more receptive to the teaching they promote. In addition, the school setting itself functions as a means of authenticating the beliefs about life and death which are conveyed through texts such as *Ailie Stuart* and *Frank Netherton*.

In most of these stories, the important lessons taught through both physical exercise and bodily frailty are imparted informally, on the playing field or in the sick-room. As indicated at

the beginning of this chapter, games and physical education were incorporated only gradually into the formal curriculum, and did not feature in many girls' schools until the end of the century. As discussed earlier, the scope of the curricula offered to both boys and girls was in practice very narrow, and was the subject of considerable debate throughout the century, not least because of the perceived need to reconcile mental exertion with care for health. The attitudes and opinions generated by this debate are reflected in both fictional and non-fictional writings, and are the subject of my next chapter.

Chapter 5

‘A Little Learning’: the place of the curriculum in school fiction

‘But, mama, Fanny is going to learn many more lessons than I am’, protests Edith Herbert in the opening chapter of Catherine Douglas Bell’s *What May I Learn? Or, Sketches of School Girls* (1849). Having discovered that she is to go to Miss Scott’s school with her friend Fanny Russel, Edith pleads, ‘She is going to begin Italian and German as well as French, and mathematics and drawing, and she is going to attend a class for chemistry. Now, mama, my petition is that you will allow me to attend these classes too. [...] I wish so very much to learn Italian, German, and mathematics and drawing’ (5-6). However, Edith’s request falls on deaf ears. Her parents are determined that at present she should confine her studies to English, French, arithmetic and music. This is partly because they believe ‘that too much study is injurious to the health’ (7), echoing the popular medical opinion cited in the last chapter. Equally, however, they want her to have the time to acquire the feminine ‘habits of gentleness, patience, and forbearance’ (40) exemplified by her mother and elder sister. Deploing the practice of devoting the greater part of each day ‘to the mere learning of lessons’ (7), her father asks, ‘[D]o you think that to spend your time thus, is the way to become what we wish you to be, a noble, generous, warm-hearted, unselfish woman’(sic) (26).

Questions concerning the place of intellectual study in schools, such as those raised by Bell in this text, pervade nineteenth-century discussion of the shape and content of an appropriate curriculum for both sexes. These questions, and the contradictory and controversial assumptions underlying them, are exhaustively debated in numerous educational documents of the period, ranging from theoretical treatises to the extensive evidence gathered by the Clarendon and Taunton Commissions and recorded in the reports of 1864 and 1867-8.

Although the school story tends to give rather less attention to academic matters than to the issues of social and physical education discussed in previous chapters,¹⁰⁰ it nevertheless makes a significant contribution to these debates. My aim in this chapter is to identify the ways in which selected writers of fiction represent and engage with concerns about the curriculum, and to assess the extent to which they use depictions of formal lessons and academic study both to endorse and to challenge accepted practice. Although teaching methods were also an issue for debate, I shall concentrate mainly on the treatment of curriculum content. Like provision for social and physical education, so-called ‘mental training’ was closely related to the definition and maintenance of separate gender roles. As in previous chapters, I shall therefore consider books for boys and girls separately.

A curriculum for ladies

In taking the content of learning as a principal focus, *What May I Learn?* is unusual among the school stories of its period. However, Bell’s attempt to set out the essential features of a course of study specifically designed to cultivate a distinctive feminine character makes a particularly appropriate starting point for this chapter. This is partly because she offers a critique of several curriculum models, and also because she addresses the need to reconcile mental training with provision both for social and moral education and for the safeguarding of physical health. The narrative charts the upbringing of Edith Herbert, whose formal schooling, as indicated in the dialogue quoted above, is closely controlled by her parents. Obligated to concentrate initially on English, French, music and arithmetic, she is eventually allowed to add botany to her studies

¹⁰⁰ The educationalist and assistant Taunton commissioner Joshua Fitch, for example, was critical of Tom Brown’s School Days, asserting, ‘It leaves out of view, almost entirely, the intellectual purpose of a school.’ *Thomas and Matthew Arnold and Their Influence on English Education* (1897): 105.

and to develop her considerable musical talent through taking extra lessons in piano and singing. Although much less ambitious than the courses pursued by her peers, this modest programme allows Edith time for Bible study, for play, and for ‘reflection and feeling’ (53), so that she grows spiritually, morally and physically as well as mentally.

Bell presents Edith’s developing character, as formed by her studies and parental guidance, alongside portrayals of other girls whose education has been managed differently, sometimes to their advantage, but more often to the detriment of health and character. Thus through comparing and contrasting the experiences of a group of students, she attempts to define the particular place of academic learning in the overall training of a girl.

Fanny Russel is the first of Edith’s friends to be introduced. Her mother justifies the large number of subjects she is to study by explaining, ‘[E]very girl learns these things now, and I could not answer to myself to allow my dear little Fanny to be behind all her companions’ (95). However, in being guided by fashion, Mrs Russel fails to take account of her daughter’s somewhat limited abilities. The strain of trying to master so many subjects and to compete with her peers makes Fanny ‘listless and languid’ (95) so that she regresses instead of improving academically. Finding herself ‘quite stationary at the bottom’ (172) in all her classes, she is scorned by her school-fellows, and consequently becomes ‘careless and indifferent’ (172). In contrast, Edith is described as ‘acquiring more strength of principle, more energy and earnestness, while [...] advancing in activity and intelligence, and all her faculties opening up and gaining new vigour’ (171).

More dramatically, Edith’s development is also contrasted with that of Helen Mackenzie, a highly intelligent girl who delights in study. Wishing to cultivate her daughter’s ‘uncommon talents’, her proud mother subjects her to a relentless ‘routine of lesson upon lesson, class upon class’ (137). Although Helen does not find her school work difficult, it proves ‘too

varied and too ceaseless' (155). As a result, she becomes physically and mentally exhausted. Losing all taste for learning, she spends her days lying passively on the sofa. As she tells the worried Mrs Herbert:

'I know so well the misery of going on from day to day, every faculty of the mind taxed to its very utmost, with dry, mechanical learning, no time to think, or feel, but in one constant whirl of excitement and toil. And to feel that no good is coming of it, [...] that the calm coldness of old age is creeping over your heart [...] while you are still but a foolish child. And then the misery, the utter wretchedness of feeling that you have no time to think of God'. (151)

Helen's plight epitomises the physical and spiritual dangers alleged by many to be inherent in strenuous intellectual activity for girls, and emphasises the implications for their health and well-being which were highlighted in the previous chapter. Excessive academic study is shown here not only to have destroyed Helen's health and made her unfit for a productive life, but also to have separated her from God. For some time, her life is in the balance, and although she recovers, Bell emphasises that 'she died young, and while she lived, her life was not of that value to herself or to others, that it might have been, under different management' (162).

Jane Murray is another girl whose life is ruined by 'an injudicious education' (201). Sent by her well-meaning but humble parents to a fashionable seminary to learn 'accomplishments' and 'real refinement' (215-6), '[s]he did learn to play a little, to sing a little, and she did pick up a very imperfect knowledge of French and Italian; but she did not learn either to reason or to feel' (216). On her return home, she proves on a practical level to be 'thoroughly useless as an assistant to her mother in her household duties' (217). Much more seriously, Bell shows how the defectiveness of her education is revealed in contempt for her home and family, and in her inability to provide sympathy and support for a husband who eventually deserts her.

In contrast to all these examples, the Herberts' decision 'to keep back [their] talented daughter' (248) is rewarded. Bell stresses that Edith's much more circumscribed education gives her all the cultivation she needs, so that 'in solid acquirements and in lighter accomplishments, few equalled, perhaps none, surpassed her' (248). At the same time, she grows up to be unselfish, cheerful and useful, and so 'thoroughly fitted to adorn any society, and yet perfectly contented to be in her own quiet home' (249). Further, Edith is considered as prepared not only for this life, but 'for eternity' (249).

A particular feature of the Herberts' approach to education is the importance they attach to informal learning, through example and experience. By restricting the time Edith gives to formal lessons, her parents ensure that she gains understanding of a woman's role through playing with her younger brothers and accompanying her mother when she visits the poor and infirm. It is through these activities too that she learns to be considerate and helpful to others. Edith also has time to explore and enjoy the natural world. Bell's narrator comments:

saved from the wearied, painful feelings that her overworked companions had to endure; [...] it was also evident that her mind was more capable of receiving pleasure than theirs; that her powers of observing and enjoying were far quicker; that she was, in short, much more awake to all that was passing around her than they were. (99)

When Edith is later allowed to join a botanical class, Bell shows how her formal study is complemented and enriched through 'long walks' (186) with a fellow pupil, pointing to the significant contribution which the observation and appreciation of nature make to both intellectual development, and to personal happiness.

While characterisation is the chief means by which Bell explores the impact of the formal curriculum on the schoolgirls she depicts, she reinforces her views through reporting a number of conversations between Mr and Mrs Herbert and both their own children, and the parents of other girls. Thus when Agnes Herbert supports her sister in her request to learn German, Mr

Herbert offers a critique of ‘the present fashionable system of education’ (53), which aims ‘to fill a poor girl’s mind with [...] all the mass of unconnected ideas, that a mere routine of school lessons is calculated to give, to the utter exclusion of everything else’ (53-4). Later, his observation of the contrast between the liveliness displayed by Edith and the languor and listlessness exhibited by Fanny and Helen leads him to lecture Mrs Russel and Mrs Mackenzie on the perils of over-education. These discussions help Bell to realise her acknowledged aim in this text, which is to ‘moralise’ (249) through the fictional depiction of the effects of the system of education she denounces. In her conclusion, she goes further, drawing explicit lessons from the experiences of the girls described, and offering direct advice to mothers on the education of their daughters.

Opposing views in justifying a female curriculum

The views attributed to the Herberts and overtly articulated by Bell in this story reflect widely-held contemporary perceptions about the relationship between women’s intellectual and physical development on the one hand, and their responsibility to exercise spiritual and moral influence on the other. As the discussion of Maudsley’s ideas in the last chapter demonstrates, nineteenth-century scientific theory provided popular opinion with a medical rationale. In her analysis of the scientific arguments cited by opponents of the higher education of women, Joan Burstyn points out that ‘the idea that mental strain could cause terrible repercussions was generally accepted as fact’ (1980: 80). As she explains, this notion was based partly on current anthropological and medical belief, which judged women not only to have underdeveloped brains, but also to be constitutionally delicate and lacking in stamina.¹⁰¹ Anne Pendered is

¹⁰¹ See J. Burstyn, *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* (1980): 70-81 for a discussion of these arguments.

typical of educationalists who warned against the mental and physical fatigue caused by unnecessary intellectual exertion for young women, asserting: ‘The anxiety attending excessive application is evidently inconsistent with permanent health of body; and it must eventually impair, if it do not utterly destroy, the vigour of the mind’ (1827: 198). The most serious consequence of intellectual exertion for young women lay in its supposed capacity to divert energy from the healthy development and maintenance of the reproductive organs, leading to weakness, disease and sterility. Underpinning this idea was the theory of the conservation of energy, derived from physics and applied to human physiology. Herbert Spencer, one of its earliest proponents, explained:

[T]he amount of vital energy which the body at any moment possesses, is limited; and that, being limited, it is impossible to get from it more than a fixed quantity of results. [...] Hence, if during youth the expenditure in mental labour exceeds that which Nature provided for; the expenditure for other purposes falls below what it should have been; and evils of one kind or other are inevitably entailed. (1861: 265)

While this principle applied to both sexes, it was increasingly used to justify opposition to the expansion of women’s education. Spencer himself argued that educated women were more likely to be sterile.¹⁰² The influential American physician, Edward Clarke, maintained that in draining the uterus of ‘vital force’ (1873: 69-70), ‘the education of the brain’ led to nervous conditions such as neurasthenia as well as to infertility. In England Maudsley was propagating similar ideas, stressing the social as well as the individual implications of prioritising women’s mental development over their education for motherhood. ‘For it would be an ill thing,’ he wrote, ‘if it should so happen that we got the advantages of a quantity of female intellectual work at the price of a puny, enfeebled, and sickly race’ (1874: 203).

¹⁰² Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Biology*. 2 vols. (1867), Vol. 2: 486.

By the 1860s, however, many of the conjectures which provided the rationale for the impoverished curriculum offered to girls were being vigorously disputed, with teachers themselves challenging medical opinion. For example, Dorothea Beale meticulously gathered statistical evidence to demonstrate to the Schools Inquiry Commission that, in her school at least, serious study did not constitute a threat to health.¹⁰³ She described too how her pupils' success in the public examinations recently opened to girls¹⁰⁴ was proof not only of their mental and physical stamina, but also of their ability to attain academic standards comparable to those reached by boys. At the same time, the inspection of girls' schools in Lancashire led Assistant Commissioner Bryce to conclude that, far from being the result of intellectual strain, 'ill-health seems to be far more frequently caused by the languor and dullness of an unoccupied mind than by overwork' (SIC vol. IX: 825).¹⁰⁵ Drawing on such evidence, the Commissioners dismissed as 'a long-established and inveterate prejudice' the opinion that 'girls are less capable of mental cultivation [...] than boys' (SIC vol. I: 546), and concluded:

So far as from its being true that they [i.e. girls] are likely to suffer from increased and more systematic intellectual exercise and attainment, the very opposite view is maintained, both as a result of experience and on scientific authority. (557)

¹⁰³ In a letter to the Commission dated 1st January 1867, Beale analysed the causes of absence between August and December 1866 at Cheltenham Ladies College. She found that the rate of absence amounted to less than one day per pupil, and observed, 'There is no single case this half-year in which it is even pretended that study has produced illness' (SIC vol. II: 81).

¹⁰⁴ Girls were first allowed to enter for the Cambridge Local Examinations on a trial basis in 1865, after which their participation was authorised on a permanent basis. The evidence of Emily Davies and Frances Buss to the Commission endorsed Beale's view that examinations had a positive effect on girls' academic achievement.

¹⁰⁵ Mr J.D. Fearon reached a similar conclusion as a result of his survey of girls' schools in London (SIC vol. VII: 389).

Intellectual training as a threat to moral and spiritual development

As highlighted in Bell's fictional text, in addition to jeopardising physical health the intellectual training of girls was widely perceived as posing a threat to their spiritual and moral development through encroaching on time properly dedicated to religious duties. Because women had primary responsibility for transmitting Christian beliefs and values to the young, considerable importance was attached to their own moral and religious formation. Thus a number of early nineteenth-century discourses on girls' schooling emphasise the absolute priority to be given to moral and spiritual development in any overall scheme of instruction. For example, Pendered opens *Remarks on Female Education* (1827) by stressing that the primary aim of girls' schooling should be 'the formation of a character prepared for the duties and trials of this life, and for happiness in that which is to come' (17). It is only halfway through her book, following three chapters elaborating this principle, that Pendered begins to discuss the academic curriculum, and even here she is careful to treat 'general and particular objects' (193), such as arithmetic and English grammar, in relation to their ability to foster such moral qualities as industry and attentiveness. Similar emphases can be found in other theoretical works of the same period, such as Frances Broadhurst's *A Word in Favour of Female Schools* (1826), and Georgiana Bennet's *Remarks on Female Education* (1842). Bennet attaches particular weight to the exertion of moral 'influence' (13) within both the family and society at large, echoing Sarah Stickney Ellis's description of the 'intimate [...] connection which exists between the *women* of England, and the *moral* character maintained by their country in the scale of nations' (Ellis 1839: 52). Sarah Lewis's *Woman's Mission* (1839) had gone even further, claiming a quasi-political role for woman through the designation of her influence over husband and sons as 'the regulating power of the great social machine' (46).

The promotional material produced by the girls' schools of the period typically stresses the priority given to the cultivation of their pupils' physical and moral well-being, indicating that, at least in theory, they shared the educational principles upheld by theorists such as Pendered and Ellis.¹⁰⁶ However, it also highlights the tensions inherent in a system which, in preparing girls to become wives and mothers, was also expected to provide 'passports to marriage' (SIC vol. I: 547). For instance, before outlining the curriculum offered, the 1834 prospectus for St Margaret's School¹⁰⁷ in Edinburgh states: 'Virtue being the groundwork of a solid Education, the most particular attention will be paid to the Christian instruction and to the Morals of the pupils'(1). Nevertheless, in addition to religious and moral training, the school also advertised a much broader secular curriculum than that approved by either Pendered or Bell, providing instruction in 'the English, Italian and French Languages; Writing, Arithmetic, Geography and History, the Use of the Globes, the general principles of Astronomy (studied with the help of an Orrery), and Natural History; Drawing and Painting, Plain and Ornamental Needlework,' as well as Music and Dancing as extras. The practice of attempting to teach such a large range of subjects was based on parental expectation that schooling should make their daughters appear 'attractive in society' (SIC vol. IX: 289). Not surprisingly, it frequently led to the confusion of aims and shallowness of coverage which, as indicated in Chapter 1, and personified in Bell's characterisation of Jane Murray, increasingly became the focus of much contemporary criticism of girls' education. In a scathing account of her experience of an exclusive Brighton

¹⁰⁶ It should be noted that both Pendered and Ellis ran schools where they aimed to apply their principles in practice. In 1821 Pendered became a partner in a school in Denmark Hill, while Ellis opened her own school at Rawdon Hall in Hertfordshire in 1844.

¹⁰⁷ St Margaret's School, Edinburgh. *Prospectus* dated 10th June 1834. (John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, Bodleian Library, Oxford.)

boarding school¹⁰⁸ between 1836 and 1838, the suffragist Frances Power Cobbe (1895) describes teaching which was not only superficial and ineffectual – history and geography, for instance, were learnt by memorising large tracts of a text book – but which also placed greatest emphasis on what she considered of least value:

Not that which was good in itself or useful to the community, or even that which would be delightful to ourselves, but that which would make us admired in society, was the *raison d'être* of each requirement. Everything was taught us in the inverse ratio of its true importance. At the bottom of the scale were Morals and Religion, and at the top were Music and Dancing. (56)

Writing over fifty years after leaving school, Cobbe judged women's education to have been 'at its lowest ebb' (50) during the 1830s.¹⁰⁹ Even so, its inadequacies continued to attract similar criticism well into the second half of the century. Among the teachers¹¹⁰ giving evidence to the Schools Inquiry Commission in 1865, Frances Buss, principal of the North London Collegiate School, dismissed the content of most girls' schooling as 'showy and superficial', and declared the pupils who joined her own school at 12 and 13 to be 'very deficient' both in English and arithmetic and in religious knowledge and 'moral discipline' (SIC vol. V, part II: 258). Questionnaires and visits to schools by the Assistant Commissioners generally led them to support this view. In particular, they considered that the disproportionate amount of time girls were expected to devote to practising the piano constituted a major obstacle to 'sound learning' (SIC vol. VII: 40). They noted too how neglect of basic literacy

¹⁰⁸ According to Cobbe, this school run by Miss Runciman and Miss Roberts at 32 Brunswick Terrace, was considered the most prestigious of the hundred or so girls' schools operating in Brighton at the time.

¹⁰⁹ Harriet Martineau had made a similar point in her article 'Middle-Class Education in England. Girls'. *Cornhill Magazine* 10:59 (November 1864): 549-568, attributing the rise of 'mushroom "Ladies' Seminaries"' (551) to the increased prosperity of the middle classes following the Napoleonic wars, and their desire to make 'fine ladies of their daughters' (551).

¹¹⁰ The Commission heard evidence (published in volume V of its report) from eight women teachers associated with the reform of female education, as well as receiving a large number of written submissions.

and numeracy led to poor attainment among the girls they examined,¹¹¹ perpetuating the accepted belief in their lack of both physical and mental aptitude for serious study, and contributing to an inexorable cycle of low expectations and inadequate achievement. As a result, and in direct contradiction to the claim made in many treatises on education that the intellectual training of girls undermined their moral and spiritual development, the impoverished curriculum to which most were exposed was increasingly perceived as seriously limiting their ability to nurture and safeguard domestic morality. Thus Dorothea Beale asked, ‘[H]ow much misery and family disunion has been caused by the narrow prejudice of an undeveloped mind in a mother?’ (Beale, 1869: xxxiii). Maria Grey and Emily Shirreff (1850) commended the study of mathematics ‘as a school for the reason’ (104) in which women might be thoroughly prepared to undertake the moral formation of their own children. Others expressed the conviction that intellectual training enabled girls to manage a home more effectively. Asked if they should learn to cook and sew, Emily Davies told the Schools Inquiry Commissioners: ‘[I]f they were made sensible women they would get it for themselves. The most cultivated women are generally also the most efficient in household matters’ (SIC vol. V: 251).

Educating girls for work

While many commentators continued to judge female education in terms of its ability to prepare pupils for marriage and family life, as the century progressed it was increasingly recognised that not all girls would occupy a traditional domestic role. As Isabella Tod, the Irish campaigner for the reform of women’s education, commented, the ideal cherished by

¹¹¹ See for instance D.J. Fearon’s analysis of the responses to the examination papers he set for girls in London schools (SIC vol. VII: 397-407).

many parents of a society in which all girls marry, and all marriages turn out well, 'is not a true picture of life' (Tod 1874: 9). The 1851 census had revealed that two million women – a third of all those over twenty – were self-supporting.¹¹² Of these, approximately 25,000 were single middle-class women employed as teachers or governesses. A variety of demographic and economic factors, including a sharp rise in the cost of living,¹¹³ meant that many middle-class men married late or not at all, while fewer fathers could afford to support their unmarried daughters. Consequently, the number obliged to be financially independent grew substantially during the 1850s and 1860s.¹¹⁴ The difficulty many had in finding work was specifically attributed to insufficient 'mental training' (SIC vol. V: 718-20). Beale in fact recommended middle-class fathers to invest in sound education as 'a sort of insurance policy' (1869: xxxiii) for their daughters.

The constituents of sound female education were initially trialled in such establishments as Queen's College and the Ladies' College, Bedford Square, founded in 1848 and 1849 respectively to raise the academic standards of middle-class women destined for teaching, and subsequently replicated in the new schools instituted by some of those they trained. Both Beale and Buss, for instance, ensured that their pupils were given a solid grounding in mathematics, natural science, modern languages, and, at North London, Latin. As greater prominence was given to academic subjects, the time available for 'accomplishments' of a purely social nature was inevitably reduced in such schools. The model curricula disseminated by the London Association of Schoolmistresses, for example, suggested that girls under 12

¹¹² For a detailed analysis of women's employment in 1851 see 'The Results of the Census in Great Britain in 1851,' *Edinburgh Review* Vol. CIX No. CCXXII (April 1859): 293-336.

¹¹³ Some of the reasons for the increase in the number of single women are summarised by June Purvis in *Hard Lessons* (1989): 60.

¹¹⁴ By 1871, 40% of those over the age of 20 were single or widowed.

should devote most of the working day to aspects of English, arithmetic and two foreign languages,¹¹⁵ spending no more than thirty minutes on music practice. As educational opportunities for girls expanded in the second half of the century, they rapidly proved that they could study academic subjects and reach standards similar to those attained by boys.¹¹⁶ Asked whether she believed that a distinction between the mental powers of boys and girls called for a differentiated curriculum, Buss replied ‘that the girls can learn anything they are taught in an interesting manner’ (SIC vol. V: 254). Nevertheless, she and many of the other headmistresses who spearheaded the reform of female education remained committed to the ideal of a curriculum which continued to foster some of the skills desirable in a ‘polished lady’ (36). At both North London and Cheltenham, for example, Buss and Beale provided for the study of music, with Beale allowing ‘a large proportion of time for the practice of the piano’ (SIC vol. V: 727). In addition, Buss was convinced ‘that every girl should learn how to use her needle’ (254).

A new curriculum for a new girl

In focusing on a perceived tension between intellectual and spiritual, moral and physical development, Bell’s *What May I Learn?* highlights the potential of ‘hard study’ to induce mental and physical strain, and to impinge on time which should be devoted to religious duties and to the cultivation of ‘all good feelings and habits’ (25). In exploring the tensions between academic education and provision for moral and spiritual development, however, another

¹¹⁵ See *A Scheme of Instruction. To which are appended school time-tables*. (The London Association of Schoolmistresses, 187-.).

¹¹⁶ See evidence of Emily Davies to SIC, which outlines the subjects in which pupils from a wide range of girls’ schools were entered for the Cambridge Local Examination in 1865 (SIC vol. V: 242-3).

evangelical story presents sharply opposing views on the female curriculum. Reflecting the approaches adopted by reformers such as Wolstenholme, Buss and Beale, the anonymous *Harrie; or, Schoolgirl Life in Edinburgh* (1877), represents a rigorous course of study as the means by which the protagonist is enabled not only to find intellectual fulfilment, but also to gain self-respect and to acquire the skills and attitudes which make it possible for her to fulfil the Christian ideals of service which have been instilled in her from infancy.

The experience of academic study is presented from the viewpoint of the orphaned Harrie Jardine, who leaves ‘the wilds of Yorkshire’ (7) to live with her fashionable aunt and cousins in Edinburgh. There all three girls are sent to the Dunedin Institution to complete their education. The writer’s portrait of the school is clearly based on establishments such as the Scottish Institution for the Education of Young Ladies, which was founded in 1834 to give ‘the highest kind of education’¹¹⁷ to women, and which provided the model for the new girls’ schools established in England two decades later. Previously taught by a governess, Harrie is initially bewildered by the sheer size of the school and the breadth of the demanding curriculum. As well as continuing with writing, French, German, arithmetic and music, she is introduced to algebra, Latin, Italian, drawing and natural philosophy. However, Harrie is both intelligent and conscientious, and, unlike Bell’s protagonists, is shown quickly to benefit from the excellence of the teaching and the stimulus afforded by the wish to excel:

The succession of classes, each one bringing her into contact with a fresh mind that had concentrated its power on the subject taught, was a delight to her receptive nature. Then the excitement of the daily competition, and the eagerness to stand well with each master, gave an element of romance and zest to study, which rendered it delightful to her imaginative temperament. [...] Harrie worked with her whole heart. (73-4)

¹¹⁷ See the *Prospectus for the 22nd Session, October 1855* (John Johnson Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford). This outlines a broad curriculum which includes all branches of mathematics as well as the physical sciences, and contains reports from external examiners praising the standards achieved by pupils.

She finds too that at the Dunedin, diligence is valued above the ‘outward show’ (74) prized by her fashionable relations. Whereas she is criticised at home for her awkwardness, and appears sulky as a result, at school she is praised for her eagerness and responsiveness, and gains both dignity and animation in the pursuit of study. Nevertheless, because she has been trained to put others before herself, Harrie begins to worry about the importance study has come to assume in her life. Confiding in Miss Monteith, the relative with whom she has lived up until this point, she says:

‘It all stops at myself. No one else is the better for my being first in French or German, or never missing in English; and I sometimes think it is wrong for me to care so very, very much about it as I do; for what good does it do anybody? It is not living for others in the very least, and yet I feel it is everything to me [...] Do you think it is selfish to live so?’ (82)

Miss Monteith, however, sees no conflict between commitment to study and the desire to live according to Christian principles, and reassures her:

‘Whatever our hands find to do, we are to do it with our might [...] Your duty at present is to cultivate your mind, and not to trouble about the result, so far as your ideal life of unselfishness is concerned. But it is very possible that He who sees all things on to their close may have some way by which you can apply this very culture to a Christ-like end’. (83)

This in fact proves to be the case. The writer shows how Harrie’s education, and the strong work ethic she has imbibed, ultimately give her the resources to support her aunt when the family suffers serious financial loss. For instance, her mathematical skills enable her to understand money matters and help her aunt adapt to living in relative poverty. In contrast, her cousin Meta, who thought ‘that, as ladies were not to be clerks, they need not know much about arithmetic’ (71), responds to the crisis by becoming ‘hysterical’ (105). Both she and Isabel refuse to help with the housework, while Harrie works ‘harder than anyone’ (104) both at home and at school. At the Dunedin, her standing gains her a paid position as a part-time assistant in the junior class, allowing her to continue her studies while contributing to the

family's finances. Later, she is given the opportunity to become self-supporting when she is offered work as a governess. Although a reversal in the family fortunes make it unnecessary for her to accept, it is clear that Harrie's academic training has prepared her for independence as well as for the efficient management of a household.

Among the girls' school stories published before 1880 which I have discovered, *Harrie* is unique in its depiction of a highly academic institution and an intellectually gifted protagonist. While Harrie perceives femininity in conventional terms of 'living for others' (82), she is given few opportunities to put her ideals into practice before her relations fall on hard times. Until the closing chapters of the book, she is characterised as distinctly unfeminine, wearing her hair short and uncurled, and adopting her father's name. Inept at the piano, where her cousins excel, her successes are purely scholastic. Nevertheless, the writer is at pains to show how, far from further undermining her femininity, the 'encouragements of her school life' (120) soften Harrie's character, while happiness renders her beautiful. She shows too how instead of compromising her religious principles, academic study effectively equips her for Christian service. In so doing, she challenges the stereotypes governing much discussion of female education, and anticipates later work which celebrates the 'new girl'.

The classical curriculum and the making of a gentleman

Just as, prior to this movement towards a more academic curriculum, the girls' schools sought to produce 'ladies' equipped to fulfil conventional female roles in society, so those for boys aimed, in the words of one old Etonian, to foster 'that assemblage of qualities which [...] constitute the accomplished gentleman' (Coleridge, 1860: 95). Until well into the second half of the nineteenth century the study of the classics provided the principal means by which educated gentlemen were produced. In 1845, for example, a boy in the first five forms at

Westminster could expect to spend thirty-five hours a week in formal lessons, of which seventeen were devoted to Greek and twelve to Latin. These involved the study of grammar, the daily construing of set texts,¹¹⁸ learning passages by heart, and prose and verse composition.¹¹⁹ Unlike the miscellaneous classes typically offered to girls to enable them to display an assortment of skills and factual knowledge to the greatest social advantage, this highly focussed curriculum aimed to provide a rigorous mental training designed to equip pupils for virtually any occupation in adult life. Fifteen years later, Charles Scott, Head Master from 1855 to 1883, defended Westminster's continuing role 'as a nursery of classical learning' by assuring the Public Schools Commission:

The teacher's object should be to provide such a training as may best discipline the powers for their future task, whatever it be. And for this purpose no system seems to me likely to be so effective as one which [takes] as its groundwork the grammatical and logical study of the languages and literature of ancient Greece and Rome. (PSC vol. II: 205)

In his own evidence to the Commission, the Head Master of Harrow, Henry Montagu Butler, set out in more detail the intellectual benefits conferred by classical studies, claiming that if a boy has worked hard,

he will carry with him when he leaves [...] some capacity for thinking clearly, some sense of the value of accuracy and thoroughness in work, some respect for knowledge for its own sake, some appreciation of the most graceful and generous, if not yet of the most profound, thoughts enshrined in literature, a consciousness that he knows but little, and a desire to know more. (PSC vol. II: 282)

However, not all witnesses called by the Commission were equally convinced of the value of a curriculum so overwhelmingly dominated by Greek and Latin. At Eton, for instance, a

¹¹⁸ Construing involved the analysis and interpretation of the syntax of a text.

¹¹⁹ See *A Short Account of The Discipline, Studies, Examinations, Prizes, etc., of Westminster School*. (1845). (John Johnson Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford.)

number of classical masters themselves were concerned at the low status accorded to arithmetic, which had been incorporated into ‘regular study’ as recently as 1851, and to French, which was taught privately to a minority of boys by a master regarding himself as ‘a mere *objet de luxe*’ (PSC vol. I: 84). Others argued that the ‘English gentleman’s education’ should include history and geography (PSC vol. III: 152), music (228) and drawing (264). At Rugby, a school where arithmetic and French were already firmly established, there was support for the introduction of a ‘modern’ class concentrating on physical science, modern languages and history in order to meet the needs of the large percentage of pupils leaving ‘at 17 or 18 years of age, very imperfectly educated, with little Latin and less Greek, [and] with stagnant and ill-informed minds’ (PSC vol. IV: 277). Even the élite of such schools who went on to read classics at the universities were often judged to be deficient in both knowledge and accuracy. One Oxford tutor commented that ‘average men bring up but small results of the training to which they have been subjected for years’ (PSC vol. II. Appendix: 11), while another declared that such training was ‘[a]dequate no doubt for the careful cultivation of choice specimens, [but] not adequate to a similar cultivation of the average crop’ (vol. II. Appendix: 18).

The classics also dominated the curriculum in the endowed grammar schools, in charitable foundations such as Christ’s Hospital, and in many private academies, giving rise to some of the same problems as those identified in establishments such as Eton and Rugby. For example, the Taunton Commissioners found that at Christ’s Hospital a quarter of pupils never progressed to the higher forms because they had failed to acquire even an elementary knowledge of the classics. Commenting on the irrelevance of such an education to the lives that most were destined to lead, they wrote: ‘To train these boys up in an elaborate classical curriculum shows about as much wisdom and kindness as to prepare an elaborate dinner of six

courses for a friend whose train is starting in 15 minutes' (SIC vol. VII: 292), concluding, 'As a linguistic training Latin [...] may have helped to teach them docility, but nothing more' (SIC vol. VII: 508).

However, as described in Chapter 1, a number of newer foundations were experimenting with teaching a wider range of subjects. At the City of London School, for example, Assistant Commissioner Fearon identified what he regarded as 'the best form of [...] curriculum' (279) for a boys' secondary school:

It should be based upon modern science pre-eminently and modern languages subordinates; but giving the pupils also an opportunity, if they will stay on long enough, of being led with success into the highest walks of superior education, into all the cultivation, taste, and research of classical learning. (279)

It is significant, though, that in prioritising 'modern' subjects, Fearon still assigned a special status to classical studies, epitomising the ambiguities and tensions which characterised the process of curriculum reform. Similarly, a number of those who gave evidence to the PSC argued for the retention of Greek and Latin alongside the allocation of time to the sciences, mathematics and French.

Nevertheless, the evidence presented to the Clarendon and Taunton Commissions persuaded both that a curriculum devoted predominantly to the classics frequently led to 'mental waste' (PSC vol. I: 374), and failed to educate the majority to fulfil useful roles in a society increasingly dominated by industry and commerce. Thus while neither suggested that they should be abandoned, both recommended that the time allocated to Greek and Latin should be reduced to allow for the systematic teaching of natural science and modern languages. They advised too that more attention should be given to written English, history and geography, and to music and drawing. Such calls for a more liberal approach to the curriculum gained the

support of prominent intellectuals, including Thomas Carlyle¹²⁰ and John Stuart Mill,¹²¹ as well as of distinguished scientists and eminent educationists. Claiming that a fourth-century Christian Roman boy could be transplanted with ease into a nineteenth-century British public school and ‘not meet with a single unfamiliar line of thought’ (Huxley 1867: 121), the biologist Thomas Huxley urged the replacement of ‘your old stereotyped system of education’ (122) with the study of ‘the methods and facts of science’ (122). The physicist John Tyndall argued that as well as exploiting a pupil’s natural curiosity, these methods would give a mental training comparable to that provided by classical studies by effectively cultivating the powers of observation, reasoning and abstraction and promoting ‘precision of thought [...] and prudence, foresight, and sagacity’ (Tyndall 1867: 18). Others, including the philosopher and classical scholar Henry Sidgwick, argued for the direct teaching of English language and literature in addition to natural science. Defining the schoolmaster as ‘a missionary of culture’ (Sidgwick 1867: 107), he asserted that boys ‘want something that speaks to their opening minds and hearts, and gives them ideas. And this they are seldom able to find to a great extent, in the ancient works they read’ (108).

¹²⁰ For example, in *Sartor Resartus* [1831] (London: Chapman 1896): Carlyle attacks the ‘hide-bound Pedants’ who cram their pupils with ‘dead Vocables’ and asks, ‘How can an inanimate, mechanical Gerund-grinder [...] foster the growth of anything; much more of Mind’.

¹²¹ Mill used his Inaugural Address to the University of St Andrews (1867) to analyse in detail both the benefits and limitations of classical studies, and to promote the importance of mathematical and scientific education. *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, ed. J.M. Robson, vol. XXI (Toronto University Press, 1984).

Frederic Farrar and the fictional critique of a classical education

One of those who provided factual information¹²² to the Public Schools Commission was Frederic Farrar, an assistant classical master at Harrow under Butler, and now probably best remembered as the author of several novels set in schools and colleges. His detailed returns to the Commissioners show that over two-thirds of his teaching time was given to Greek, Latin and ancient history, with the rest allocated to mathematics and divinity, and the cursory coverage of French and geography. Frustrated with the narrowness of the curriculum, he responded to the Commission's report by publishing *Essays on a Liberal Education* (1867), a collection which included Sidgwick's call for the systematic teaching of English, and to which he contributed a paper 'On Greek and Latin Verse-Composition as a General Branch of Education'. In it he describes the fruitlessness of much classical education and deplores the ignorance to which he believes it leads:

When we consider how little, at the end, our schoolboys know, and how vast are the regions of science with which they are wholly unacquainted; [...] and, above all, how rich in fruit might have been those many barren hours which have been lavished on the impotent effort to acquire a merely elegant accomplishment – then I confess that my regret deepens into sorrow, indignation, and shame. (217)

He reiterated many of his concerns in a lecture¹²³ delivered at the Royal Institution in the same year, denouncing as '*a deplorable failure*' (1867: 18) the current system of classical education with its 'conjugating and declining, and gerund-grinding, and Latin-verse manufacturing' (40) and its corresponding neglect of English literature and natural science. Both of these subjects

¹²² See PSC vol. II: 436-7, 478 and 494-5 for Farrar's reports on the books and teaching methods he used with the third division of the Shell (a class of 34 boys, mostly aged 14 and 15) in 1861, the composition and translation undertaken by his pupils, the allocation of time to different subjects, and additional work undertaken outside school hours.

¹²³ Entitled 'On Some Defects in Public School Education' (1867), this lecture was followed by a second lecture to the Royal Institution in January 1868. Called simply 'Public School Education,' this was subsequently published in *The Fortnightly Review* 3:15 (March 1868): 233-249.

he regarded as indispensable to the formation of ‘a more able, a more many-sided, a more useful, and a happier man than it has ever lain within the opportunities of one Englishman in five hundred to become’ (1868: 243).

Farrar’s life and work epitomise the tensions inherent in the curriculum debate. As a prominent schoolmaster and churchman, he was an establishment figure in many respects.¹²⁴ At the same time, he was undoubtedly one of the most radical as well as most prolific educationalists of the nineteenth century. He used lectures, sermons, treatises and numerous periodical articles to promote his criticisms of current practice and his ideas for a reformed curriculum. In addition, like other teachers such as Henry Adams¹²⁵ and Henry Pullen,¹²⁶ he made fiction a means of communicating his views on contemporary schools for boys. I have chosen to discuss his work in some detail here because it depicts vividly the impact of opposing philosophies of teaching and learning, highlighting the tensions between adherence to the traditional classical curriculum and the commitment to a more liberal education.

Farrar’s first novel, *Eric; or Little by Little*, was written during his time at Harrow. Although he insisted that it was based on ‘intimate practical experience’ (Preface to 2nd Edition, 1858: vii), until relatively recently neither this book, nor the later *St Winifred’s; or, The World of School* (1862), has been regarded as providing a reliable picture of school life. Both stories focus on what Claudia Nelson has termed ‘a Manichaeian tug-of-war’ (1991: 60) for the protagonist’s soul, and feature a series of dramatic and highly emotive incidents which serve to test and either corrupt or strengthen his sense of honour and decency. As a result, one early

¹²⁴ Farrar served as Head Master of Marlborough, Canon and Archdeacon of Westminster and Dean of Canterbury as well as a master at Harrow.

¹²⁵ Master at Winchester and author of many school stories, including *The Boys of Westonbury* (1877) and *Schoolboy Honour* (1861) discussed in Chapter 3.

¹²⁶ At one time assistant master at Bradfield and author of *The Ground Ash* (1874) referred to in Chapter 1.

reviewer¹²⁷ of *Eric* found Farrar guilty of ‘exaggerations and extravagances’ and attacked his work as portraying ‘most of the popular misconceptions of the subject of education which we desire to combat’ (390). Twentieth-century surveys of the school story express similar views. Isabel Quigley, for instance, dismisses *Eric* as ‘overheated and absurd’ (1982: 134). However, painstaking work by Patrick Scott (1971) and Ian Anstruther (2002) has demonstrated that Farrar’s representation of school life, both in its depiction of daily routine and in its recounting of specific events, is firmly rooted in his own experiences as a pupil at King William’s College in the Isle of Man and as a master at Marlborough and Harrow. Scott shows for example that the description of the death of Eric’s brother Vernon in a fall from a cliff, often cited as an example of Farrar’s lack of realism and love of ‘crude thrills’ (1971: 168), draws directly upon the factual record of an accident in which a King William’s pupil called Robert Woodhouse was killed in 1850.¹²⁸ More mundanely, his description of Mr Gordon’s lesson on Caesar which serves as Eric’s introduction to Roslyn School reflects precisely the account of his teaching methods which Farrar submitted to the Clarendon Commission. Thus while it is true that Farrar’s overriding concern is with the battle between good and evil he perceives as intrinsic to a boy’s moral and religious development, it is also clear that he aims to show that conflict being played out within a setting which as far as possible reflects the realities the ‘world of school’ as he saw them.

Most of the action in *Eric* and *St Winifred’s* takes place outside the classroom, in the study, the common-room, the playground and the dormitory, as well as on the seashore and in the countryside where the boys roam in their spare time. Nevertheless, the curriculum and formal

¹²⁷ See *The Quarterly Review* 108: 216 (October 1860): 387-324. The review article also discusses works by Edward Monro and Geoffrey Heygate.

¹²⁸ The incident is described in detail in James M. Wilson, *An Autobiography 1836-1931* (1932): 12-13.

learning are central to Farrar's representation of school life. As I have already indicated, the content and methods of teaching he describes at both Roslyn and St Winifred's closely resemble those used at Harrow, with pupils taking turns to read aloud and construe a classical text. Preparation for lessons involved a considerable amount of rote learning of grammar rules as well of passages from the texts being studied. Farrar describes these methods without comment, and Scott expresses some surprise that he fails to exploit the opportunity to emphasise their shortcomings, and to contrast them with his own ideal of a liberal education. Instead, Farrar chooses to show how the demands of study impact on his protagonists and their peers in a variety of ways, presenting the ideal of a classical education alongside the portrayal of its limitations, and so allowing his readers to make their own assessment of the merits as well as the dangers inherent in the system he portrays.

The classical curriculum and the testing of character

In both *Eric* and *St Winifred's* commitment to academic work is shown to be a sign of moral strength. When Eric arrives at Roslyn, his first acquaintances include the friendly, honest Russell and the 'rough-looking' (20), vindictive Barker. The characters of the two boys are clearly revealed when they are called up to construe a passage of Caesar.

'Russell, begin', said the master; and immediately the boy [...] began reading a few sentences, and construed them very creditably, only losing a place or two. He had a frank open face, bright intelligent fearless eyes, and a very taking voice and manner. Eric listened admiringly, and felt sure he should like him. Barker was put on next. He bungled through the Latin in a grating, irresolute sort of way, with several false quantities, for each of which the next boy took him up. Then he began to construe; – a frightful confusion of nominatives without verbs, accusatives translated as ablatives, and perfects turned into prepositions ensued, and after a hopeless flounder [...] Barker came to a full stop; his catastrophe was so ludicrous, that Eric could not help joining in the general titter. (22)

The exposure of Barker's incompetence leads him to express his resentment through the unrelenting harassment of Eric, who quickly proves his intellectual superior. Farrar comments that 'the occupation of hating him seemed in some measure to fill up the vacuity of an ill-conditioned and degraded mind' (28), so underlining the close interrelationship between mental and moral shortcomings.

He draws similar contrasts in *St Winifred's*, as when the 'thoroughly manly [...] and innocent' (377) Charlie Evson wins approval for repeating a Latin lesson 'cheerfully and faultlessly' (379), while Wilton, a 'brazen [...] hardened little scapegrace' (370) fails miserably. Farrar describes how, as the two boys stand in the master's room, Wilton catches sight of their reflection in a mirror, and realises the immense gulf between them, 'a gulf not of void chaos and flaming space, but the deeper gulf of warped affections and sinful thoughts' (378). Wilton resists a fleeting urge to reform, and, encouraged in bad habits by Kenrick, a disaffected monitor for whom he acts as a fag, is finally expelled from school for stealing. However, a near-fatal accident forces Kenrick himself to repent of his irresponsibility and to embark upon 'a life in earnest' (530). His resolve is reflected in his new attitude to work. Becoming 'strenuous, diligent, modest, earnest, kind' (530), he leaves St Winifred's for the university after winning one of the highest open scholarships.

As Elizabeth Hale (2008) has pointed out, Farrar, like a number of other writers of school fiction, relates the association between moral character and mastery of the classical curriculum partly to its capacity to foster what she calls 'quiet virtues such as honour, rigour, discipline, and self-restraint, qualities that nevertheless act as foundation-stones of nineteenth-century masculine virtue' (47). This is demonstrated particularly clearly in *St Winifred's*, a novel which explores a variety of influences on the intellectual and moral development of Kenrick and his peers as they progress through the school. The narrative is focalised through the

character of Walter Evson, a boy who, as a new pupil, is almost overwhelmed by his inability to come to terms with learning Greek and Latin according to traditional methods, but who perseveres in the face of difficulty.

Walter would get up with the earliest gleam of daylight, or would put on his trousers and waistcoat after bed-time, and go and sit, book in hand, under the gas-light in the passage. This was hard work, doubtless; but it brought its own reward in successful endeavour and an approving conscience. (119)

As a result of superhuman effort, Walter finds himself ‘progressing from strength to strength, adding to faith virtue, and to virtue temperance, and to temperance knowledge, and to knowledge brotherly kindness’ (279). Acquiring these qualities to a great extent through application to academic work, both he and Kenrick are shown eventually to ‘grow to the full stature of their manhood’ (532), fulfilling their promise as both scholars and gentlemen.

However, Farrar also explores a much darker side to the influence of the classical curriculum and the methods by which it was taught. At St Winifred’s, Walter’s classmate Daubeney is also ‘up with the earliest dawn,’ applying himself to learning his lessons ‘with grand determination’ (149), and acquiring a reputation for diligence and tenacity. Unlike Walter, though, Daubeney is not naturally clever, and overwork takes its toll on his health. His condition is more serious even than that of Bell’s Helen Mackenzie, indicating that the damaging effects of undue intellectual activity are not confined to girls. He succumbs to brain fever and dies repeating Latin verses in his delirium. In his account of the boy’s illness and death, Farrar makes it clear that the burden of classical study on less able pupils can be crippling. Even though Daubeney is consoled by the knowledge that he has always done his duty, the cost is shown to be excessive. His death destroys all prospect of ‘the strong and upright manhood’ (214) to which he had looked forward. His friends are left ‘desolate’ (218),

while his distraught mother is ‘fixed in that deep grief which finds no utterance, and knows of no alleviation’ (221).

While Daubeney is the only character in these novels to be killed by the exigencies of the classical curriculum, difficulty in meeting its demands is also shown as potentially damaging to the character. Farrar’s account of Walter’s first few months at St Winifred’s provides a disturbing picture of the effects of repeated failure on a sensitive boy. Because Walter has been taught at home, he is unfamiliar with conventional methods of teaching. In particular, he finds it difficult to learn long lessons by heart, and is repeatedly punished when he is unable to master them. His life becomes a relentless round of ‘Greek grammar, lines, detention, caning – caning, detention, lines, Greek grammar’ (58), and the result is disastrous.

[B]efore six weeks were over, Walter was ‘sent up for bad’ to the head-master. By this he felt degraded and discouraged to the last degree. Moreover, harm was done to him in other ways. Conscious that all this disgrace had come upon him without any serious fault of his own, and even in spite of his direct and strenuous efforts, he became oppressed with a sense of injustice and undeserved persecution. The apparent uselessness of every attempt to shake himself free from these trammels of routine rendered him desperate and reckless, and the serious diminution of his hours for play and exercise made him dispirited and out of sorts. (47)

Charting Walter’s growing rebelliousness, Farrar observes how ‘easy is it to make a boy bad in spite of himself, and to spoil [...] the promise of a fair young life’ (63-4). Walter is saved from that fate partly by the unconventional Mr Percival, a master who tries ‘a little kindness and sympathy’ (68), and by the help of friends gifted ‘with that sympathetic clearness of instruction which makes one boy the best teacher to another’ (119). Thus Walter is shown to achieve academic success despite the systems in place at St Winifred’s, rather than with their support.

Elsewhere, the conventions governing teaching and learning are depicted as having a much more detrimental effect. Although in *Eric* Farrar identifies a number of reasons for the

protagonist's fall from grace, his disaffection from learning clearly contributes to his moral and intellectual decline. Very early in his school career he is twice unjustly accused of using 'cribs'¹²⁹ in class and beaten as a punishment. As a result, his pride is severely hurt, and he grows 'careless in work and more trifling and indifferent in manner' (59). Nevertheless, he is a natural scholar. When he is 'taken up' (84) by the much older Upton, he becomes 'a ready pupil' not only in 'mischief' (84) but also in the appreciation of classical literature. In defiance of rules, Eric habitually visits Upton in the common-room reserved for the older boys. When a master interrupts them in the middle of a spirited discussion of the best way to render a line of Aeschylus, Eric is told to write out Virgil's fourth Georgic as a punishment. The mindless nature of the task, which destroys all pleasure in the poetry, coupled with the sense of injustice at being penalised in effect for enjoying intellectual debate, adds impetus to Eric's drift into idleness and disobedience.

The cheating for which Eric is wrongly blamed is a widespread practice at Roslyn, and is identified by Farrar as another indirect but morally destructive consequence of the attempt to impose a curriculum which is burdensome and lacking in interest for most pupils. Except for Russell and his friend Owen, both of whom are portrayed as genuine scholars, Eric soon discovers that all the boys in his form copy from each other, or from 'torn leaves concealed in their sleeves, or dates written on their wristbands' (46). Farrar makes it clear that as a result, most become hardened to dishonesty and lose the master's trust in them as 'gentlemen' (56). However, although he refuses to resort to these practices himself, Eric dares not risk his popularity by speaking out against them, and in his second term he becomes involved in helping others to cheat. In consequence he receives a flogging which he considers unjust as

¹²⁹ These were unauthorised translations of Greek and Latin texts to which boys would surreptitiously refer when called upon to construe.

well as humiliating, and Farrar points to the incident as the first step in Eric's moral and intellectual decline.

From that day forward Eric felt that he was marked and suspected, and the feeling worked on him with the worst effects. He grew more careless in work, and more trifling and indifferent in manner. Several boys now beat him whom he had easily surpassed before. (59)

As Hale points out, the demands of learning Greek and Latin are used by Farrar to serve as 'as a test of honesty' just as they also provide a means of trying the virtues of self-discipline and perseverance. However, the effects of the trial are seen to confirm virtue in only a few, and to lead the majority into deviance and duplicity.

An alternative curriculum

As well as demonstrating the impact of the traditional classical curriculum upon his characters, in line with his theoretical writings Farrar uses his fiction to suggest alternative, more liberal approaches to education. For example, in *St Winifred's* he shows how Walter's own growth is promoted by opportunities to develop his gifts for singing and for athletics, both of which help him to break out of the cycle of hopelessness initially induced by the limitations of the formal curriculum. He also shows how the boys of St Winifred's learn to explore and express feeling through wide reading of English literature and through creative writing in the vernacular. For example, Henderson, who finds Greek and Latin prose composition difficult, amuses himself by writing a play about his classmates. Byron's 'Lamentation for Kirke White', rather than a classical text, provides Reginald Power with the words to articulate his sorrow at Daubeney's illness. After his friend's death, Power deals with his grief by composing an epitaph in verse to which Walter also contributes several lines. Later, familiarity with the language and imagery

of *Paradise Lost* enables Power and Henderson to discuss and interpret the exploitation and corruption of younger boys by an older pupil they identify with Milton's Belial.

Above all, Farrar illustrates the value of learning from experience and through enjoyment. Strongly influenced by the Romantic vision of childhood expressed by Rousseau, Wordsworth and Coleridge,¹³⁰ he describes both Eric and the Evson brothers as being taught in childhood by 'Nature [...] – wisest, gentlest, holiest of teachers' (1858: 5). He shows too how Eric's aunt and cousin eschew 'theories of education' (6) and allow him to roam the countryside, developing both independence and a love of the natural world. Mr and Mrs Evson invent an object for every walk, encouraging their children to use all their senses and become familiar with the plants, birds and animals of the district. As a result, Walter goes to school lacking 'book knowledge' (3), but 'full of that intelligent interest in things most worth knowing which is the best and surest guarantee for future progress' (3). Once at St Winifred's, his trials are made easier to bear by the proximity of the hills and the seashore, where he finds occupation and companionship as he watches birds and porpoises. It is significant that when the sympathetic Mr Percival first tries to help Walter, he takes him for a walk on the beach. There, he sees a boy who is utterly different from the 'idler' he has encountered in the detention class.

He was all life and vivacity; [...] if you had seen his face light up as he kept picking up whelks' eggs, and mermaids' purses, and zoophytes, and hermit-crabs, and bits of plocamium or coralline, and asking me all I could tell him about them, you would not have thought him a stupid or worthless boy. (67)

Perceiving Walter's enthusiasm for learning in this context, Mr Percival finds ways of affirming and harnessing his natural intelligence and so enables him to progress in his school

¹³⁰ Farrar was particularly influenced by the writings of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, to which he was introduced as a student at King's College London by his tutor, F.D. Maurice. In his biography of his father, Reginald Farrar quotes George Russell, a former pupil, who recalled Farrar's determination to introduce his classes at Harrow to the work of Coleridge, as well as to the poetry of Wordsworth and Milton. *The Life of Frederic William Farrar* (1904): 85.

work. Characterised as a model teacher, his varied methods are shown elsewhere to bring out the best in all his pupils, cultivating ‘the imagination and the fancy, [...] the reason and the understanding, and [...] the powers of attention and research’ (280), and are as applicable in the classroom as on the seashore.

While Walter always retains his keen interest in the natural world, and derives both stimulus and consolation from exploring the countryside around St Winifred’s, Eric soon loses his early enthusiasm for walking in the hills and along the coast. He stops hunting for sea-anemones with his young brother, ridiculing them as ‘nasty red-jelly things, which one may see on the shore by thousands any day’ (65). As well, he is reluctant to accompany his mother in her searches for botanical specimens on the cliffs, and Farrar identifies this as a sign ‘of the gradual but steady falling off in Eric’s character’ (66). As with English literature, he never uses fiction to make an explicit case for the inclusion of natural science in the formal curriculum. Nevertheless, these examples illustrate the importance which Farrar attached to the subject as a vehicle for both intellectual and wider personal development, and which he stressed repeatedly in his theoretical writing.

Conclusions

While discussion of the curriculum dominates much nineteenth-century educational debate, the organisation and content of formal learning has a much less prominent place in the school novel. Bell’s highly polemical stance is unusual in fiction. As the work of Farrar illustrates, curricular issues are mainly dealt with through exploration of their impact on pupils and their social and moral as well as their intellectual development. Even so, the scrutiny of individual texts reveals a significant contribution to contemporary exploration of the tensions and contradictions surrounding discussion of the place and content of academic study in schools.

The ability of the traditional classical curriculum to produce scholars and gentlemen is endorsed through the representation of characters such as Farrar's Edwin Russell and Walter Evson. Nevertheless, Farrar shows too that its narrowness and difficulty make costly demands on even the most talented boys. His use of the school story to explore both its merits and limitations is replicated in the work of other writers of the period. Harriet Martineau and Emily May both depict protagonists who, like Walter, are almost overwhelmed by the demands of school work, but who ultimately succeed through prodigious effort and determination. Neither is Farrar unique in underlining the detrimental moral and social consequences of the unremitting study of Greek and Latin. Depicted as undermining ideals of manliness through encouraging a culture of blatant cheating, he shows that it has the power to produce such corrupt characters as Barker and Wilton as well as creating virtuous individuals. His bullies resemble Henry Adams' academic failures who, alienated and brutalised by their masters' efforts to instil learning with the rod, find compensation in meting out cruelty to others. Nevertheless, Farrar's characterisation of the school as a site of moral warfare, and his imaginative portrayal of the inner struggles precipitated by fatigue and repeated failure, ensure that his stories constitute a forceful challenge to established educational policy and thought.

A similar challenge is made in many texts for girls. Whereas some, like Worboise's *Grace Hamilton*, do depict the ability of a traditional boarding-school education successfully to cultivate the ideal feminine character, many others, such as *Harriette Browne's School-Days*, highlight the shortcomings of a curriculum dominated by ornamental subjects. These are shown to fail to cultivate the qualities and skills needed for a future in which girls could no longer invariably expect a husband or father to support them financially. However, in questioning the assumptions underlying a gendered curriculum for girls, writers of fiction do not necessarily agree about what should replace it. Bell warns against over-emphasis on

academic work, which she sees as a potential threat to the acquisition of a womanly character, and affirms the importance of practical induction into a domestic role at home. In contrast, the author of *Harrie* demonstrates that a rigorous intellectual training can, as reformers such as Emily Davies maintained, effectively prepare even the most unfeminine girl for running a household. By the turn of the century, such a viewpoint had become more common as stories for girls increasingly featured large academic schools. Nonetheless, such divergent approaches to the representation of an appropriate curriculum for girls are reflected in fiction up until the Second World War, when writers such as Angela Brazil and Elinor Brent-Dyer¹³¹ were still portraying small private schools for young ladies expecting simply to remain at home until marriage, alongside much larger institutions where pupils were prepared for independence.

Although Farrar does not use fiction explicitly to promote the alternative liberal curriculum he advocates in his theoretical writings, he makes a further challenge to traditional approaches to learning by emphasising the value of knowledge gained through observation and experience rather than from books. In so doing, he reflects the educational views of scientists such as John Ayrton Paris whose children's book *Philosophy in Sport Made Science in Earnest* (1827) features a protagonist who complements his classical studies with the learning of 'natural philosophy' through play. It is significant that in this text Tom is joined by his sisters in the games and walks that provide the means of instruction, and some girls' school fiction similarly affirms the crucial contribution made by experiential learning to female education. Bell is representative of a number of writers for girls who emphasise the limitations of a curriculum

¹³¹ For example, Brent-Dyer's *Heather Leaves School* (1929) and *Monica Turns Up Trumps* (1936) both feature protagonists who are removed from large boarding schools when their work and behaviour deteriorate, and are sent to smaller establishments to acquire habits more becoming to young ladies.

based purely on ‘book knowledge’ by illustrating the benefits of exploring the natural world as well as practising adult roles.

Many of the tensions apparent in the representation of the curriculum in fiction can be related to the changing perceptions of the future roles for which schools were expected to prepare pupils, and the growing contradictions between the demands of those roles and what both boys and girls were taught. In my final chapter, I shall explore this issue further through focusing on the ways in which both fictional and non-literary texts represent the lives of pupils on leaving school and assuming the responsibilities of adulthood.

Chapter 6

The end of schooldays

‘Now, have you thought what you should like to be?’ Uncle Rupert asks Harold Hartwell in Emma Leslie’s *Harold’s Revenge: a story of schoolboy life* (1880). ‘To my mind, anything would be preferable to your being a poor, idle gentleman, wasting your life and waiting for your father’s death – perhaps wishing for it at last’ (78). Brought up in the expectation of succeeding to the family estates, Harold has so far resisted the idea that ‘a Hartwell would work’ (36). However, a term at boarding school, where his peers have little time for such pretension, has led him to revise his views. He realises too that the family fortunes are diminishing, and unlikely to be adequate to support him in the style of life he has been anticipating. When Uncle Rupert reminds him that his mother’s dying wish was for her sons to become ‘useful men’ (40), he resolves to qualify as a doctor, and returns to school determined to work towards that end. He also encourages his younger brother Gusty to relinquish his own dreams of a life of leisure, and to settle on a future career.

As the title suggests, *Harold’s Revenge* is on one level a story of schoolboy rivalry which revolves around the settling of scores and eventual reconciliation. Nevertheless, the question of the kind of future for which the boys of Dr Valance’s school are preparing constitutes a recurring motif in Leslie’s text. Indeed, much of the antagonism which Harold provokes in his peers arises out of his initial disdain for the idea of working for a living ‘like common people’ (28). The question of what it means to grow up and go out into the world is addressed repeatedly not only by the two brothers and their uncle, but by their schoolfellows as well. School is understood by all to be a place where the character is formed and habits of work are acquired in order that pupils may take their place in society as ‘honourable, useful men’ (32).

Elsewhere, Leslie shows a similar concern with the futures of her female protagonists. For example, in *Helen's Victory* (1873), the widowed Mr Price, who has no fortune to leave his daughter Etta, sends her to Mrs Mansfield's school in the hope that she will be able to turn her education 'to good account afterwards' (13) by becoming a teacher.

In both these texts the different components of education – the shaping of the spirit, the training of body and intellect, and the cultivation of moral values and a sense of social responsibility – are conceived as means to the formation of the responsible adult. Leslie's concern with the adult roles for which her pupils are preparing, and the impact these have on their experience of schooling, is typical of the school fiction of the period. My consideration of a range of texts in previous chapters demonstrates that while the great majority focus principally on the depiction of life within the institution, most are also concerned to show how the experience of school prepares pupils for adult life, frequently placing that experience within a context which encompasses the eventual move to university, work, or domestic responsibilities.

The stories reflect concerns about the ultimate purpose of schooling which remained central to educational thinking throughout the period under consideration, as well as addressing developments in the understanding of male and female roles in society, and in consequent attitudes to work for both men and women. My aim in this chapter is to explore this concept of the school as a place of preparation for later life. Focusing on selected texts which give particular attention to life after school, I shall examine fictional and non-fictional representations of the transition from adolescence to adulthood, relating these to the differing spheres of activity open to boys and girls, and to the ways in which schools prepared them for adult roles. I shall go on to consider the extent to which fiction reveals and explores the tensions and contradictions implicit in the contrasting ways in which these roles were

understood and experienced by young people of both sexes as they went out into the world beyond school. The disparity in the roles prescribed for men and women led writers of fiction to treat this transition differently, so as in previous chapters I shall treat texts for boys and girls separately.

The transition to manhood

The fictional response to the transition from boyhood to maturity and the consequent experience of work is encapsulated in two contrasting texts which give unusually detailed consideration to their protagonists' entry into the world beyond school. Dinah Mulock Craik's *Cola Monti; or, the Story of a Genius* (1849) is a story from the middle of the period which follows the progress of two boys who leave a small classical academy to pursue careers as an artist and a city merchant. Alfred Wilks Drayson's later *The Gentleman Cadet* (1875) focuses on education and rigorous training for the military.

In *Cola Monti*, Craik devotes half her narrative to depicting the schooldays of Scottish Archibald McKaye and the half-Italian Nicolo (Cola) del Monti, reserving the second half to portray their struggles to establish themselves as professional men in London. Facilitating the change from boy to man and ensuring continuity between school and working life is the enduring friendship between the two. Begun when they both find themselves 'exiles' in an English boarding school, this is maintained through letters after Archy leaves school for a job as a clerk in the office of a cotton trader, and is consolidated further when Cola arrives in London himself. Their mutually supportive relationship is shown to be crucial in sustaining both boys as they assume together what Craik terms 'the responsible duties of manhood' (126).

In addition to their friendship, the two boys are able to draw on the commitment to hard work instilled in them at school. There Cola learns to conquer his 'idle and desultory habits' (19), whilst the competitive ethos of the Academy teaches Archy that it is good 'to set to work for oneself, and get to be something great on one's own account' (49). However, the school's narrow focus on a traditional classical curriculum of the kind discussed in the last chapter does little to prepare either formally for working life, obliging Cola and Archy to develop their talents in their leisure time. When the pair leave, they are immediately thrown on their own resources, exchanging the securities of school for the uncertainties of working life in the city. Craik uses the contrast between the two environments to convey the abruptness of their transition from boyhood to manhood. After exchanging 'the fresh country air' (79) of rural Staffordshire for 'a close London office' (79), Archy is seen to grow 'quite a man indeed' (105). Later, Cola starts his own journey as 'a lad only seventeen' (92), but arrives in the 'smoky, disagreeable, ugly city' (94) resolved 'to put off the boy and assume the man' (97).

For Archy, manhood is defined chiefly in terms of dedication to work. He takes the humble clerical job with the aim of eventually becoming a merchant himself. Obligated to spend his nights in a dreary lodging-house and his days tied to a ledger in a 'little back office' (108), he admits to disliking his occupation, but feels no shame in working. He tells Cola, 'I'll work night and day but I'll be a merchant sometime' (108), and as a result of his industry he does indeed rise rapidly in the world.

Cola is driven by a very different kind of aspiration, but nevertheless learns equally to work to achieve his ambition. While still at school, his exceptional talent for drawing leads him to dream of becoming a painter. Unable to afford specialist lessons, he assiduously practises his art, 'gradually forming himself for his future destiny, before he was yet out of boyhood' (76). Encouraged by a famous painter who sees some of his pictures, Cola embarks on his chosen

course, fired with a vision of ‘all the pleasure and success’ (83) of an artist’s life. Nonetheless, Archy sounds a note of caution: ‘I don’t know much about Art, but it strikes me that you will have years of hard work and close study before attaining eminence’ (122). This proves to be the case. Although identified as a ‘genius’ in boyhood, he finds that there is no easy path to success. As well as studying, he is obliged to take work as a book illustrator simply to secure the basic necessities of life. After he finally submits his first picture to the Royal Academy, he collapses from strain and overwork. Craik comments, perhaps superfluously, that ‘it takes many years of patient and laborious study of Art, before the most talented youth can become a great painter’ (178).

Throughout this story, Craik is concerned to stress the importance of a habit of work, which, if established at school and carried into adulthood, leads to occupational success and financial security. Although neither Archy nor Cola has been prepared academically for earning a living, both demonstrate that their schooling has taught them the value of disciplined effort. In this respect, they compare favourably with their schoolfellow Morris Woodhouse who, after two idle terms at Cambridge, appears ridiculous as he tries vainly ‘to seem a man’ (161). Even though neither protagonist follows one of the established professions, Craik makes it clear in her final chapter that work has validated both callings, and that Archy and Cola are to be honoured equally as a result of their labour. In language reminiscent of Thomas Carlyle, she designates one ‘the Man of Industry; the other the Man of Genius’ (180). Their place in society is assured as they settle in neighbouring houses in Highgate. Archy is preparing to bring his mother and sister to live with him, thus fulfilling a man’s responsibility to support the women of the family. For Cola, Craik hints at a promise of marriage and the establishment of his own household.

The schooling of a soldier: professional training in Alfred Drayson's *The Gentleman Cadet* (1875)

Like Craik's protagonists, the hero of Drayson's *The Gentleman Cadet* settles on his future career at a relatively early age. However, whereas Craik represents her characters as being heavily reliant on their own resources as they obtain the training they need, Drayson portrays a protagonist whose formal schooling is wholly dedicated to the fulfilment of his ambition to join the Royal Engineers. A chance meeting with Jack Howard, an officer in the regiment, fires fourteen-year-old Bob Shepard with the determination to join it himself, and from that point his life is directed entirely to that end. Writing at the end of the period under consideration, Drayson is concerned to provide a critical account of the constituents of a specialised military education, emphasising the importance of rigorous training at a time when, as discussed previously, traditional schooling was widely criticised for failing to prepare boys for the professions. His approach contrasts markedly with that of earlier writers. Susannah Strickland's Hugh Latimer (1828), for example, is simply handed a double commission in the army on leaving his traditional grammar school as a reward for an act of bravery. Thomas Hughes indicates that the exercise of monitorial responsibility at Rugby will equip Harry East to become 'a capital officer' (1857: 402) since, as Tom remarks, 'soldiers are very like boys' (402). Drayson, in contrast, highlights both the length of the training and the severity of the challenges which face the prospective soldier. These include passing the difficult competitive examination for entrance to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, and surviving the intense mental and physical demands of the régime at the Academy itself. However, Drayson is also concerned to show how the rigours of training transform an ignorant and inexperienced boy, motivated to work by the dream of a military career, into a resolute and resilient young man awaiting commissioning as an officer.

To prepare for the entrance examination, Bob is sent to Mr Hostler's Academy in London, an establishment represented as typical of the many 'cram-schools' created to coach boys for admission to élite institutions such as Woolwich. There Bob finds that Mr Hostler's methods of rote learning reinforced by 'whalebone and cane arguments' (154) do nothing to help him make up for lost ground. However, a few months with a sympathetic private tutor enable him to learn by teaching him to reason for himself. This ability, coupled with his determination to succeed in his ambition, gains him a place at the academy.

Once there, Bob finds that the daily life of a cadet is far from rosy. Discipline is severe, living conditions are spartan and the food is poor. As a 'last-joined' he is subject to fagging and relentless bullying at the hands of older boys, a persistent trial which makes it impossible for him to study effectively and causes him to fail in his probationary examination. The narrator devotes a large part of his text to detailing and denouncing the hardships suffered by the younger cadets in the 1840s when his story is set,¹³² at the same time commending recent improvements to the management of the Academy. However, he also shows how the idiosyncratic rituals of fagging at Woolwich, and such customs as making new cadets sing, serve as rites of passage signifying admission to an élite company which commands unconditional allegiance. He suggests too that such an environment constituted 'a useful school for the soldier. He there learnt to rough it, and to bear hardship, and too often injustice, without complaint' (148). At the end of Bob's first year at the Academy, Howard is able to remark:

'I can see that Bob there is twice the man he was when I first knew him, and he is more fit to battle with the world, than he would have been, if he had merely stopped at home translating Herodotus and catching butterflies'. (199)

¹³² Drayson subtitles his story 'A Tale of the Past'. He himself was a cadet at the Academy in the 1840s, and after service in India and South Africa, returned there as an instructor in surveying and field work.

Howard's comment is made primarily in response to the physical improvement he sees in the once 'sickly' (337) boy, but it also affirms the Academy's moral training which enables its cadets to do metaphorical 'battle with the world' as well as to engage in active warfare.

Through Bob's narrative, Drayson makes comparisons elsewhere between the benefits of the rigorous training he receives at the Academy and what he perceives as the doubtful value of the classical education conferred by the public schools and the universities. For example, in several 'passages of arms' with the priggish Charles Stanley 'who was at Oxford and very clever' (294), Bob easily demonstrates the merit of learning 'useful things' as opposed to acquiring 'pedantic knowledge' (294). At the same time, he makes considerable intellectual progress, coming second in mathematics in his final examination. His commitment to hard work, another fundamental lesson he learns at the Academy, also distinguishes him from his father, whose decision 'to live an easy life [...] rather than take up any profession' (2) he judges 'an error that enabled him to be what may be called "a mistake" all his life' (2).

Throughout his time at Hostler's and the Academy, Bob is sustained by the friendship of his 'hero' Howard, and by a vision of army life which consistently fuels his ambition. As a boy he is spellbound by Howard's tales of his adventures in Africa, while the sight of the cadets marching at the head of the regiment fills him with longing to be one of their number. Later, his uniform, put on with 'secret pride' (150), is portrayed as an emblem of the responsibility and authority wielded by the soldier. It also serves as a symbol of the difference between the cadet and the schoolboy, as he discovers when he and another ex-pupil revisit Hostler's and find that they have 'become 'objects of wonder and admiration' (150). Drayson chooses not to describe Bob's life after his time at the Academy has finished, leaving him 'to rest as it were on [his] laurels' (343) as he awaits his commissioning. However, he makes it clear that the

mental, physical, practical and moral training he has received there have transformed the delicate, dreamy boy into a man worthy of his role model, prepared to take responsibility for the lives of the soldiers he will eventually lead and command.

Beyond school – a world of men

In exploring ways in which schools equipped pupils to take their place in the wider world, Craik and Drayson, like other writers of fiction, used the school story to reflect, interpret and question key features of the changing society for which young people were educated. Three aspects of nineteenth-century life emerge from these texts as having particular relevance for the depiction of this transition from school to adulthood. These are the concepts of separate male and female spheres, the expansion of employment opportunities for both men and women of the middle and upper classes, and the development of an ideology of work which underpinned domestic activity as well as occupation in the public domain.

The notion of separate spheres has already been discussed in some detail in Chapter 1. Based on the assumption that '[men] were to be active in the world as citizens and entrepreneurs, women were to be dependent, as wives and mothers' (Davidoff and Hall 1987: 450), it had a profound impact upon the content and organisation of education for both boys and girls, and upon the opportunities available to them as they entered adulthood. As I have argued in previous chapters, the whole régime in most boys' schools was directed to preparation for responsibility and service in public life. According to Arnold, for instance, it was the task of schools such as Rugby 'to anticipate the common term of manhood' and 'by their whole training [...] fit the character for manly duties' (Arnold 1843: 59-60).

Though very different, the educational institutions portrayed by both Craik and Drayson are shown to be crucial in facilitating their protagonists' transition from a domestic environment

dominated by female family members to a life within a distinctively male sphere. In the character of Archibald McKaye, Dr Birch's academy provides the fatherless Cola Monti with an effective role model who, from his first day, urges him to '[b]e a man' (15). Bob Shepard grows up 'knowing nothing of boys' (6) and 'no more about the use of [his] fists than a girl' (82). At Hostler's, he quickly learns to defend himself. There, and subsequently at the Academy, he is also initiated into the pupil hierarchies which are embodied in the practice of fagging and sustained by physical force. More crucially, his formal military training subjects him to a discipline designed to fit him for command.

However, as indicated in Chapter 1, the boundaries between male and female spheres were often indistinct, giving rise to ambiguities in the representation of manhood. Drayson identifies few such tensions in *The Gentleman Cadet*, where living in drawing rooms and 'mixing with ladies' is seen as no part of a soldier's life, and Bob Shepard dismisses his brief infatuation with Helen Stanley as 'folly' (300). However, perhaps because it is written by a woman, *Cola Monti* approvingly assigns to both protagonists feelings and gestures which are characterised as typically feminine, as when on Cola's first day at school, Archy comforts the tearful child in tones 'modulated to the tenderness of a girl' (15).

In questioning the existence of a clear division of spheres, John Tosh contends that the establishment of a new household was considered 'the essential qualification for manhood' (2005: 36) in nineteenth-century Britain. Both these texts acknowledge this as a valid destination for their protagonists, although Bob Shepard's vision of a future in which he marries Helen is very brief. However, *Cola Monti* is one of a number of school stories, including Monro's *Basil the Schoolboy* (1854), and Paull's *Horace Carleton* (1876), which follow their protagonists through to the creation of a home, thus using the genre to endorse a manliness which encompasses the private as well as the public sphere.

The rise of the professional man

A further distinguishing characteristic of masculinity was engagement in the profitable and useful work by which female dependents were supported and the household was maintained. Opportunities for such work, through the pursuit of a profession or interest in business, grew significantly during the nineteenth century. According to Harold Perkin, the Industrial Revolution ‘emancipated the professional man’ (1969: 254). Urbanisation and rising living standards led to increased demand for the services of doctors and lawyers, while new occupations, such as civil and mechanical engineering, architecture and pharmacy flourished.¹³³ From the 1850s, entry to such professions, as to a reformed Civil Service, was increasingly by competitive examination, creating, in Perkins’ words, an ‘ideal based on trained expertise and selection by merit’ (1989: 4).

As Craik and Drayson demonstrate, school fiction of the period reflects both the expansion of the career opportunities open to boys, and the increasing importance attached to achieving appropriate training and qualifications through education. At the same time it illustrates and examines the evolving role of schooling in preparing boys socially as well as intellectually and practically for the world of work. In earlier stories, the cultivation of virtue rather than academic learning is generally seen as the primary purpose of schooling and represented as providing the foundation for social and material success in adulthood. Thus in *Tales of the Academy* (2 Vols, 1820 and 1821), the aptly-named Ernest achieves eminence and wealth in trade owing to the ‘unabated diligence’ (I: 58) and ‘exemplary propriety’ (59) he attains at school. Texts of the middle years of the century continue to emphasise the importance of the

¹³³ In *The Mid-Victorian Generation: 1846-1886* (1998), K. Theodore Hoppen quotes census data to show that in the forty years between 1851 and 1891, the numbers in the learned professions of the Church, medicine and the law grew by about 10%, while those in other professional and public service occupations, such as teaching and engineering, almost trebled (41).

promotion of moral values in boys' education, while increasingly giving weight to the training for leadership which the social structures of the schools were designed to provide. When Hughes' Squire Brown states explicitly that '[t]he object of all schools is not to ram Latin and Greek into boys, but to make them good English boys, good future citizens' (69), he conceives good citizenship in terms of the embracing of a profession and of service rather than the social status and material prosperity which rewards the virtuous pupils of Muchlore Academy. Sent to Rugby to be made 'a brave, helpful, truth-telling Englishman and a gentleman and a Christian' (74), Tom Brown puzzles in the closing chapters of the book over his future and the means by which he can do 'some real good in the world' (363). The account of his search for a vocation is continued in *Tom Brown at Oxford* (1861), one of several sequels¹³⁴ to school stories which follow their protagonists' careers at the university and beyond.

At this point in the century the most usual destinations for boys were the army and the 'learned professions' of medicine, the law and the Church. However, as *Cola Monti* illustrates, fictional texts were already acknowledging the widening of opportunity in commerce and the arts as well as evaluating the contribution of both academic and moral training to the preparation of pupils for more traditional roles in public life. Twenty years later, the anonymous *Old Schoolfellows and What Became of Them* (1871) features characters whose schooling has helped them to prepare mentally and morally for successful careers in journalism, business and banking as well as in the learned professions and the armed services, thus reinforcing the way in which both the aspirations and expectations of young adults were changing in the second half of the period under consideration.

¹³⁴ Other examples include Emily May's *Dashwood Priory* (1855), sequel to *Louis' School Days* (1851), and William Heygate's sequel to *Godfrey Davenant* (1847), *Godfrey Davenant at College* (1849).

However, not all those leaving school were equipped to meet those expectations. As discussed in the last chapter, much contemporary criticism of the grammar and ‘great’ public schools centred on their failure to prepare boys for the new opportunities created by Britain’s rapid rise as an industrial, commercial, imperial and military power. For example, in his 1865 survey of Lancashire schools, James Bryce highlighted the lack of a coherent educational response to social and economic change, observing: ‘The county has, so to speak, taken a sudden leap out of one age into another, and no steps have been taken to supply the new institutions which an altered state of society demands’ (SIC vol. IX: 580). The classical education provided by most of the old-established schools was given direction largely by the requirements of the universities to which only a minority proceeded,¹³⁵ and little alternative provision was made for the majority of boys who were destined for careers in the armed forces, public administration or the burgeoning new professions.¹³⁶ As already indicated, the curriculum at Dr Birch’s academy was tailored to the needs of such a minority, and is shown by Craik to cater for neither the prospective businessman nor the budding artist, while in *The Gentleman Cadet*, Drayson highlights the difficulties faced by boys inadequately prepared for entry to the military academies.

In *Cola Monti*, both protagonists find means of supplementing and extending their education once they have left school, each using his own initiative to secure the practical training he needs to realise his ambition. For Drayson’s Bob Shepard, however, intensive, specialised

¹³⁵ According to one witness to the Public Schools Commission, ‘preparation for the universities is the object for which boys are sent to Eton, and [...] it is sufficient for the school to teach that’ (PSC vol. II: 144). However, in the nine schools surveyed, only a quarter of the 467 leavers went on to Oxford or Cambridge. Similarly, Bryce found that very few boys went on to university from the Lancashire grammar schools.

¹³⁶ Attempts to form an ‘army class’ in which the study of mathematics, history and geography partially replaced Greek and Latin were generally deemed unsuccessful because, according to one headmaster, ‘candidates for the army are usually among the most idle boys at a public school’ (PSC vol. I: 436).

academic tuition is vital if he is to gain entry to Woolwich. This is not forthcoming at Mr Hostler's, an institution which reflects the ineffectiveness of many such establishments.¹³⁷ In contrast, the training he receives at the Academy is both rigorous and aligned in every detail to the demands of his future career. The importance of acquiring a high level of skill, and of proving his abilities in a series of demanding examinations, is stressed throughout the text, and shown to be essential to the successful leadership of large numbers of men, for whose 'lives [...] prospects and happiness' (232) the army officer is ultimately responsible.

Nevertheless, even in this highly specialised environment Drayson identifies serious impediments to learning. Principally, these are embedded in the institution of fagging and the culture of bullying to which it gives rise. Like Henry Adams, whose critique of the monitorial system in the public schools is discussed in Chapter 3, he shows how the practice of fagging may harm younger boys whilst reinforcing the sadistic predilections of older ones, making them unfit for leadership in adult life. He comments that 'when boys of from fifteen to eighteen have unlimited power entrusted to them they usually become tyrants' (113), and goes on to describe how some young cadets are permanently scarred, and even driven to leave the service, by abusive seniors. Others, like Bob, find that their work is constantly interrupted by the demands made on them by the fag masters who regard them as little more than slaves. However, unlike the victims of bullying in texts such as *The Boys of Westonbury*, Bob rejects the idea of mutiny on the grounds that it is the worst act a soldier can commit. Thus in spite of its defects, the Academy is shown to be effective in inculcating ideals and values which override the personal wishes of its cadets.

¹³⁷ Evidence collected by the Public Schools Commission showed that between July 1860 and January 1863, nearly two-thirds of candidates for Woolwich from the nine 'great' schools, all but two of whom had been 'crammed', were unsuccessful (PSC vol. II: 40-41).

The Victorian ideology of work

Alongside, and inextricably connected with the growth of employment opportunities and professional training for both men and women in the course of the nineteenth century, there developed a distinctive ideology of work. In his study *The Victorian World Picture* (1997), David Newsome relates this to the utilitarian ideals disseminated by Jeremy Bentham and his disciples, emphasising how ‘the principle of “utility” as underlying so much of the thinking and actions of the Victorians became almost a watchword to them’ (51). As an example, he refers to the educational ideals and methods of Thomas Arnold. Rooted in the belief ‘that work is the appointed calling of man on earth’ (Stanley, 1844: I, 51), these found expression in his ability to show each boy ‘that he had the means of being useful, and thus of being happy; and [...] thus to value life and his own self, and his work and mission in the world’ (50).

Similar principles were enshrined in the concept of the ‘Gospel of Work’ promulgated by Thomas Carlyle which, in Mark Danahay’s words, ‘preached that all human beings were put on this earth to accomplish one supreme task, that of work’ (Danahay 2005: 23). In Carlyle’s view, work was intrinsic to masculine identity: if a man ‘cannot work [...] he cannot get his destiny as a man fulfilled’ (Carlyle 1843: 134). This notion was popularised by Samuel Smiles whose *Self-Help* (1859) used a series of biographical sketches to demonstrate that ‘resolute working’ led to ‘the formation of truly noble and manly character’ (1859: 19). Significantly, his examples validate a wide range of occupations, including some not traditionally regarded as ‘manly,’ such as those of the artist and poet.

The cultivation of an ethos of work was seen as fundamental to the educational process of fitting boys for ‘life.’ Exhortation to shun indolence and embrace ‘earnestness’ was a common theme of advice given to pupils. Henry Montagu Butler urged the boys of Harrow to the ‘sustained, hearty effort which leads to great results whether here or in later life’ (1861: 408),

while at Rugby Arnold identified idleness as one of the ‘six evils’ characteristic of boyish culture (1833: 140). In spite of such exhortations, however, the Clarendon Commission found ample evidence of such a culture in the nine ‘great’ schools, most notably at Eton, where they observed that ‘the charms of idleness are [...] very numerous and very seductive’ (PSC vol. I: 91). In their conclusions they stated:

We have been unable to resist the conclusion that these schools, in very different degrees, are too indulgent to idleness, or struggle ineffectually with it, and that they consequently send out a large proportion of men of idle habits and empty and uncultivated minds. (55)

As a result, the Commissioners advocated a number of measures ‘to encourage industry’ (54).¹³⁸ A few years later, the Taunton Commissioners found that the teaching methods adopted by many grammar schools also left ‘ample facility [...] for idleness’ (SIC vol. IX: 176).¹³⁹ At the same time, they concluded that one of the factors underlying pupil lethargy in many boys’ schools was their failure to provide an education which catered for a range of aptitudes and aspirations, and commended the good practice found in some of the private and new proprietary schools which deliberately set out to provide an education specifically geared to the future destinations of their pupils, whether these were at the universities or in business or a profession.

As I have already demonstrated, the adoption of a strong work ethic is a central theme in both *Cola Monti* and *The Gentleman Cadet*, where it is identified as the essential foundation for successful transition from school to a professional occupation and the responsibilities of

¹³⁸ These included the extension of prizes and distinctions (Rec. XXI: 54), and the removal of boys who failed to make reasonable progress (Rec. XXV: 54). At Eton, in addition, they recommended a broader and more demanding curriculum and the introduction of competitive examinations to control pupils’ promotion and progress through the school.

¹³⁹ A boy was generally left to work in isolation at lessons which ‘may be done as slowly, as unmethodically, or as dishonestly as he likes’ (SIC vol. IX: 177).

adult life. The ethos of work is widely promoted elsewhere in school fiction, and given a spiritual significance in some texts. In a key episode in *Tom Brown*, Arthur's fever-induced dream first shows him those who have died working 'at some great work' (352), and then the living, who include himself and Tom, engaged in the same effort. While the nature of their labour is not made clear, Hughes attributes his recovery to the belief that 'God had work for Arthur to do' (339), and indicates that the search for that work is not only central to the whole of life, but extends into eternity. In *Harold's Revenge*, the Hartwell brothers come to understand work not only as the means of restoring the family fortunes, but also as a God-given and honourable duty. In contrast to those in the professions, gentlemen of leisure like the boys' father are censured by Leslie as living 'idle, useless, selfish, helpless' lives (30).

Throughout the period school fiction characterises idleness as a major evil which undermines a boy's potential for both usefulness and happiness in adult life. Reference has already been made in Chapter 3 to the 'counter-influences' exerted in many stories by a minority of pupils who neglect study and games to indulge in drinking, smoking and gambling. Such groups are typified by Farrar's 'Anti-muffs' whose influence on Eric makes him grow 'idle and careless' (1858: 244). Both Craik and Drayson give some consideration to the long-term consequences of idleness and dissipation, showing how such habits have the potential to blight a future career. Craik's Morris Woodhouse, though academically gifted, wastes his time at Cambridge, and for a short time succeeds in tempting Cola to embark on 'a season of pleasure' (169) which almost ruins his prospects of completing his exhibition picture. In the character of Sipson, Bob Shepard's fag-master, Drayson depicts an 'idle and untruthful' (166) boy who is eventually dismissed from the Academy for drunkenness, and who never redeems his failure as cadet by 'steady work' (265).

However, even though such texts represent commitment to work as an essential means to the formation of a manly character, they also challenge prevailing ideology by highlighting the dangers of overwork. Drayson's Bob Shepard learns to balance study with exercise and fresh air, noting that the cadets who worked 'nearly all night with wet cloths round their heads [...] generally failed, and not unusually knocked themselves up' (337-8). Cola Monti becomes seriously ill with brain-fever after working night and day to finish his masterpiece. These examples demonstrate clearly the capacity of nineteenth-century school fiction to challenge current educational thinking as well as affirm it.

A world for women

Although the opportunities open to girls on leaving school were much more limited than those open to boys, most stories written for female readers give comparable attention to the future destinies of their protagonists, highlighting in particular the moral and social attributes considered necessary for contented womanhood. As already pointed out, the ultimate purpose of their education is generally expressed in terms of preparation for the fulfilment of accepted gender-specific roles in the domestic sphere, a theme which characterises texts throughout the period in question. However, as in the case of boys, what was actually taught often bore no relation to the lives girls were expected to live on leaving school, either in the home, or, increasingly, in the workplace.

The ambiguities inherent in both the education offered to girls, and in the concept of the private feminine sphere for which that education professed to prepare them, meant that the transition from school to adulthood was frequently experienced as a time of considerable tension. For example, many girls sought to establish a place in family and society which was consistent with the desire for personal fulfilment as well as the norms of femininity. For

others, those norms had to be reconciled with the need to be self-supporting. To conclude this chapter, I have chosen for closer consideration two texts which explore these tensions with particular clarity. The anonymous *Hartfield: or, Emily at School* (1848) is representative of the majority of girls' stories in endorsing a protagonist's future place in the home. At the same time, it depicts exceptionally strongly the pressures and choices awaiting girls destined for the domestic sphere. In contrast, A.M. de Jongh's *Inez and Emmeline* (1867) reflects the concerns of the substantial group of texts which examine the challenges facing girls who have to support themselves. Such texts constitute roughly a third of the corpus, and include Anne Manning's *Poplar House Academy* (1859), the anonymous *Little Violet* (1864) and E.R.'s *Ruth and Rose* (1870) among many others. De Jongh's story is especially interesting in its exploration of the experiences of three contrasting protagonists to affirm differing adult roles for young women.

Leaving Hartfield: choices in the domestic sphere

As well as presenting a positive picture of the domestic role for which the school is carefully preparing its pupils, the author of *Hartfield* gives particular attention to the hazards inherent in the transition from school to the world beyond. Accordingly she characterises leaving school as a 'crisis' (154) in the lives of Emily Grey and her friends, and the story is in part framed as a warning to readers 'just entering upon life' (161) of the crucial choices that face them. While school is depicted as 'a safe and happy haven,' the world is shown to present 'a thousand dangers' (123-4). Contrasting the prospect of a life of idleness or frivolity with one of quiet service, the writer declares:

You are called upon to declare, by your actions, if not by your words, which Master you will serve. Can you be content with fleeting pleasures, that perish in your grasp? Or will you seek for that pure and lasting happiness which worldly prosperity cannot give, nor

adversity destroy? (161)

The strong echoes of biblical language underline the gravity of a decision which is spiritual as well as practical in nature. It is these alternatives which face the pupils of Hartfield, a happy community of twenty girls presided over by the formidable Mrs Clement who has 'a deep sense of her own responsibility as a guide and teacher of the young' (20). Thus her school in no way resembles the fashionable seminaries deplored by contemporary educationists such as Beale and Wolstenholme: throughout the text the writer emphasises the part it plays in preparing girls for 'future usefulness' (114), setting out what she considers to be the components of a good education for girls.

Intellectually, Mrs Clement rejects the rote learning characteristic of many schools. Instead, she aspires to cultivate her pupils' understanding and powers of independent thought. On a spiritual level, she supervises the girls' moral and religious formation very carefully, while her young niece Miss Elizabeth offers them a sympathetic role model. The lasting consequence of their education is conveyed in the image of schooldays as a 'seed-time' (114). Accentuating its challenges, the path from childhood to maturity is also likened to a pilgrimage during which pupils are helped to conquer faults and slowly acquire the 'perseverance' and 'application' needed for the performance of adult duties. The writer emphasises that the teacher 'knows that there is a dangerous future awaiting the young traveller, and therefore seeks to prepare her for the perils of the way' (52). In this overtly evangelical text, that way is consistently shown to lead to a life beyond the earthly one, so that besides deciding a girl's immediate fate, the choices made in childhood and youth are seen to determine whether eternity will be passed 'either in happiness, or in unutterable woe' (14).

The story centres on the career of Emily Grey, an orphan destined to become her aunt's companion upon leaving school. Emily is fond of Mrs Westwood and never questions her future role. However, she is portrayed as being 'naturally of an indolent disposition' (27), and arrives at school possessing few of the qualities such a position demands. Disobedient, easily distracted and lacking in firmness of purpose, she has to undergo many humiliations and trials before she learns to apply herself to her studies. However, Miss Elizabeth patiently teaches her how to study effectively by thinking for herself, as well as helping her to understand her calling in terms of Christian service, so that eventually she is considered sufficiently mature and accomplished to assume her duties. Emily leaves Hartfield with mixed feelings, sobered by the thought of responsibility to come, but also looking forward to 'her emancipation from school restraints' (153) and the prospect of more leisure than she has enjoyed until now. Her friend, Helen Orford is even more excited at the prospect of greater independence and freedom. She tells Emily:

'I shall be like the butterfly, gathering sweets from every flower. A happy simile, [...] for certainly the butterfly, emerging from its chrysalis, presents an apt emblem of myself, escaping from the dull imprisonment and the conventual discipline of school'. (156)

During their last term at Hartfield, the two girls spend much time discussing their future lives, fully aware of the choices they will soon be free to make. Helen has come late to the school, and hitherto has 'been educated only for the present world' (126). Mrs Clement's teaching makes no impact on her plans to embark on a round of social pleasure. In contrast, Emily demonstrates the effectiveness of her school training by undertaking to continue her studies and to spend time reading, gardening and taking walks in the country, besides combining duty with pleasure by teaching the Sunday school and visiting the poor. These decisions are shown to have significant implications for the future happiness of both girls, and for their ability to be of service to those around them. The writer emphasises that it is Emily's

busy and useful way of life which ultimately brings the greatest contentment. The futility of Helen's choice is demonstrated when her enjoyment is cut short by 'sudden and distressing reverses' (167) and she realises too late that she has wasted her youth. Having 'given her best years to the service of the world' (168), she is described as never recovering the strength to make the contribution to society of which she was once considered capable.

The dramatic terms in which the contrasting fortunes of the two friends are expressed give considerable emphasis to the writer's representation of the transition to adulthood as a crisis. At the same time, while underlining the crucial place of individual choice in the process, they draw attention to the limited opportunities available to girls in the mid-century. Nevertheless, whilst affirming a role constrained by the expectation that a girl's future was confined to the domestic sphere, the writer rejects the concept of female education simply as a means of conferring the superficial knowledge and accomplishments considered necessary for attracting a husband. Instead, she delineates a model of schooling which understands a life dedicated to home duties as a calling, and which also prepares girls for useful and fulfilling work in the wider community.

Happily ever after? Home-making and work in A.M.de Jongh's *Inez and Emmeline; or, The Adopted Sister* (1867).

Published 20 years after *Hartfield*, A.M.de Jongh's *Inez and Emmeline* has a quite different focus. The novel depicts the contrasting experiences of three girls who are obliged to become self-supporting on leaving school, and explores their contributions to the spheres of both home and work to highlight some of the tensions inherent in the expectations of women's roles towards the end of the period. Central to the story are the careers of Emmeline Dane and her adopted sister, rescued as a small child from a shipwreck and named Cecilia. After his wife's

death, Mr Dane sends the two girls to Mrs Radcliff's school where he expects that they will receive kindness as well as a sound education. He urges them to make the best of their time there, conscious that the income from his dwindling solicitor's practice may not guarantee his daughters 'a comfortable independence for the future' (99). In the character of Mrs Radcliff, de Jongh portrays a dedicated teacher who combines a high degree of professionalism with motherliness, thus personifying the qualities needed for independence as well as for family life. Totally committed to training her pupils to live useful lives, she undertakes to ensure that both girls will leave school fully equipped to support both themselves and their father if that should prove necessary. Her assurances are justified when Mr Dane loses all his savings in an ill-advised business speculation. Reflecting the continuing pertinence of Martineau's assertion that 'for an educated woman [...] there is in all England no chance of subsistence, but by [...] teaching' (1839: 448), Mrs Radcliff finds the highly accomplished Cecilia a post as a governess in a wealthy London family, and employs the more diffident Emmeline as an assistant in her own school.

Although well-grounded by Mrs Radcliff, both sisters approach their new lives with some apprehension. The position of the governess in a private family was widely seen to be demeaning and unrewarding, both professionally and financially.¹⁴⁰ Countering such perceptions, de Jongh portrays Cecilia's experience in much more positive terms. Because she is well-qualified, she is well-paid, given comfortable accommodation and allowed ample free time. A talented musician, she also proves a capable teacher who readily wins the cooperation

¹⁴⁰ Charlotte Brontë, for instance, claimed that 'a private governess has no existence, is not considered as a living rational being except as connected with the wearisome duties she has to fulfil'. Letter to Emily, June 8, 1839 in *Selected Letters*. Ed. M. Smith (2007): 12. Sarah Lewis, who had also worked as a governess, complained that she received 'the wages and social position of a domestic'. ('On the Social Position of Governesses'. *Fraser's Magazine* 37: 20, April 1848: 412).

of her pupils and inspires them to succeed. The only flaw in her otherwise happy existence is 'a sad want of companionship' (219), and at times she is overwhelmed by feelings of loneliness and melancholy. However, she tackles the problem determinedly by continuing to study and work at her music.

Emmeline faces difficulties of a different order. Even though she remains among friends in a familiar environment, she soon finds that she is totally unsuited to teaching. Over-anxious to please, she loses sleep, and her gentleness only encourages her pupils to make her 'grieved and perplexed' (225). She becomes so 'thin and pale' (225-6) that Cecilia pronounces her 'not fit' (226) for such an occupation. To enable her to return home to live with her father, Cecilia offers to support them both financially, thus allowing Emmeline to withdraw from paid work and to assume the domestic role for which she is shown to be well fitted. Emmeline's future as a home-maker is confirmed when she receives a proposal of marriage which guarantees the financial security of her father as well as herself, and which frees her of the uneasiness she has felt at being dependent on her sister.

Although Cecilia no longer has to help support Mr Dane and Emmeline, and indeed is offered a home with them, she chooses to continue with her career: 'she felt happy in thus gaining her own living; much happier, she felt convinced, than she should do whilst feeling herself a useless burden upon others' (232). However, even the self-sufficient Cecilia is eventually reconciled to dependence. In a dramatic ending to the story, she is found to be Inez Vansittart, the daughter of her wealthy employer who believed her lost in the shipwreck with which the book begins. As well as releasing her from the need to work, this discovery also qualifies her for marriage to a rich suitor. Throughout the text, de Jongh has consistently stressed Inez's strength of character and highlighted her intellectual and artistic abilities. These have been carefully fostered during her schooling, so that ultimately she achieves both

professional success and financial independence. Nevertheless, the writer also makes it clear that these are gained at the cost of the loneliness of the governess's position. Ultimately, therefore, happiness for Inez as well as for Emmeline is defined in terms of marriage and the acceptance of the support of a husband, rather than in those of independence and fruitful work. The discovery of her true identity and finding of her family serve to authenticate her choice of the domestic role she has rejected previously.

Alongside her account of the careers of Inez and Emmeline, however, de Jongh also describes the efforts of one of their schoolfellows to support herself and her parents by writing. In her portrayal of Clara Owen, she shows how financial self-sufficiency transforms the life of a young woman whom disability might otherwise have forced into unwanted dependency and social marginalisation. Clara is forced to leave school when she dislocates her wrist while attempting to destroy a rival pupil's work. Once at home she becomes increasingly incapacitated as her guilt and resentment fester. Eventually she is sent on a long visit to an uncle and aunt in the hope that it will lift her spirits. In the Starkeys' 'peaceful and happy household' (125) she is enlisted to help with the children, and as a result discovers an aptitude for storytelling. Later, when her father falls on hard times, she is able to use this gift to good effect. Finding a publisher for her stories, 'she was able to earn a very comfortable independence for herself, besides very materially adding to the ease and comfort of her parents, and greatly benefitting the whole family in many ways' (156). In rejecting dependency and choosing to support herself, Clara gains a sense of worth as well as the respect and gratitude of her family. De Jongh also suggests that work is a means by which she redeems her own moral character and atones for the childhood malice that led to her accident, fulfilling Arnold's designation of work as both humanising and redemptive, 'the element in

which [man's] nature is ordained to develop itself, and in which his progressive advance towards heaven is to lie' (Stanley 1844, vol. I: 50).

Nevertheless, de Jongh also acknowledges that work undertaken as a means of self-support may undermine a girl's well-being and sense of identity, as it does in the case of Emmeline. Faced with no real choice of occupation, and forced into teaching by financial need, she suffers significant stress until she is able to take her chosen place as wife and mother. Inez, in contrast, benefits substantially from her experience as a governess so that her eventual decision to marry is not presented as a repudiation of paid work, but as the result of a genuine choice between valid alternatives. While the writer shows how the exercise of a professional career brings fulfilment and the ability to be of service to others, she consistently represents the role of home-maker as being of equal value. Not only does Emmeline eventually flourish in a domestic setting, it is also the experience of the Starkeys' happy family life which reforms Clara Owen and nurtures the gift that enables her to become self-supporting, affirming the validity of the contrasting roles assumed by young women in this text.

A woman's sphere?

While much girls' fiction reflects and endorses a clear differentiation between male and female roles, both *Hartfield* and *Inez and Emmeline* are representative of a significant number of texts which either implicitly or overtly draw attention to the ambiguities and tensions inherent in the concept of 'public' and 'private' spheres. In his critique of the work of Davidoff and Hall, Simon Morgan has pointed out that in engaging in economic activity in the home, 'women were able to justify activities which were anything but private in nature' (Morgan 2007: 3). His analysis also identifies many opportunities for women to contribute to public life through charitable, cultural and political work outside the home.

In identifying the paid work undertaken by women, Morgan refers particularly to writing and teaching, the occupations followed by de Jongh's protagonists. Girls who become teachers out of financial necessity feature in a number of other stories, particularly in the second half of the period. These include the anonymous *Harriette Browne's School-days* (1859), Sarah Fitton's *How I Became a Governess* (1861) and Emilia Marryat Norris's *Theodora* (1870). However, in all these instances the eventual opportunity to embrace a traditional domestic role through marriage or a timely inheritance is presented as a happy release, as it is for Emmeline Dane. Nonetheless, independent women who establish and manage their own schools, pursuing life-long careers in teaching, feature in virtually all girls' stories of the period. Fiction thus tacitly acknowledges the place of women as workers in the public sphere and in so doing often appears to subvert the more explicit affirmation of the private domestic roles for which pupils are being prepared. A number of these teachers, like de Jongh's Mrs Radcliff, offer girls strong role models in open recognition that some of their pupils may have to be self-supporting in the future. Fewer texts feature girls like Clara Owen who reject domesticity for work other than teaching. However, the protagonist in Margaret Oliphant's *Agnes Hopetoun's Schools and Holidays* (1859) utilises her study of languages in work as a translator of children's stories, initially to help fund her brother's medical training,¹⁴¹ but later as a means of retaining a degree of independence within the household he is eventually able to support. Like *Inez and Emmeline*, this text is significant in its attempt to reconcile prevailing expectations of a woman's role with the necessity of earning a living which faced many girls at this time.

¹⁴¹ It is relevant to note that Oliphant's own long literary career was driven by the need to support first her two sons, and then her two brothers.

Throughout the period under consideration, the philanthropic activities discussed by Morgan are portrayed in fiction as providing an outlet for female energies which similarly impinges upon the public sphere. Whilst ostensibly leaving school to help her aunt at home, Emily Gray also undertakes voluntary work in the community, visiting the poor and teaching in the Sunday school. Similarly, Sewell's Clifford twins (1846-9) share the fruits of their education with the children in the village school as well as accompanying their mother on parish visits. As Kathryn Gleadle has noted, such work, although unpaid, made an essential contribution to social welfare through its support of 'the casualties of the social hierarchy' (Gleadle 2001: 64), becoming for some a full-time commitment, and contributing further to the weakening of the boundaries between public and private spheres.

A widening sphere

The expansion of opportunities for middle-class women to follow careers outside the home, mirroring to some extent the growth of professional openings for men, was a significant factor in the gradual undermining of the concept of a separate female sphere. The development of such opportunities was given particular impetus by the demographic changes outlined in Chapter 5. Commenting on the findings of the 1851 census, which showed that females outnumbered males by half a million in the population of England and Wales, and revealed the extent to which women were obliged to be financially self-supporting, Harriet Martineau's influential article 'Female Industry'¹⁴² exposed the paucity of the employment opportunities available to women of all social classes and called for the full use of their gifts and energies in the public sphere, notably through the improvement of female education. The curriculum

¹⁴² Art I, *The Edinburgh Review* CIX: CCXXII (April 1859): 293-336.

reforms initiated by Buss and Beale among others were part of the response to this situation, but equally significant was the establishment of formal training for specific occupations. Teaching, already recognised as the principal way in which women could earn a living without compromising either respectability or femininity, had begun to be professionalised with the founding of over 30 training colleges in the 1840s alone.¹⁴³ The number of middle-class women employed as teachers rose steeply between 1861 and 1881, when 122,846 were earning a living in this way (Holcombe 1973: 203). Professional training for nursing also gathered momentum. The establishment of the Nightingale School at St Thomas' Hospital in 1860 led to the institution of training programmes in hospitals across the country, resulting in a significant increase in the number of nurses employed in the two decades between 1861 and 1881 (Holcombe 1973: 205).

Although fiction takes virtually no account of these developments in formal training, from the 1820s onwards it does acknowledge the growing need for women to support themselves and depicts schools themselves as places where some pupils are prepared for future work as teachers. De Jongh characterises Mrs Radcliff's school as one such establishment. Much earlier, in the anonymous *The Boarding School* (1823), Mrs Adair trains her impoverished pupil, Miss Damar, for work as a governess, and half a century later, in Doudney's *Monksbury College* (1878) Lucy Haydon is sent to school to be prepared for the same occupation. *Harriette Browne's School-Days* (1859) can be read as a critique of the ability of a conventional boarding school to prepare pupils for earning their own living, with a significant part of the story focusing on Harriette's difficulties when she is obliged to take up teaching

¹⁴³ In response to the growth of elementary schooling provided by the Church of England's National Society, Whitelands was founded in 1841 to train 'a superior class of parochial schoolmistress'. Queen's College in Harley Street came into being in 1848 to raise the educational standards of teachers in private middle-class schools as well as those of domestic governesses.

after leaving school herself. In contrast, the anonymous *Harrie; or, Schoolgirl Life in Edinburgh* (1877), discussed in detail in the last chapter, shows how an academic education equips a girl to find employment which enables her to contribute to the family's finances as well as fulfilling her aspiration to be of service to others.

Martineau's contention that it was desirable as well as necessary for women and girls to seek fulfilment in activity beyond the purely domestic sphere was also advanced by a growing body of literature which presented girls with role models exhibiting a broad range of intellectual and artistic gifts besides exemplifying initiative and independence. Books such as Joseph Johnson's *Clever Girls of Our Time, and How They Became Famous Women* (1862) set out to demonstrate that with 'purpose, will, determination' (1862: iv) a woman could achieve distinction in many fields, even proving herself the intellectual equal of men. The desire to undertake work of 'practical usefulness' outside the home is increasingly expressed in girls' fiction as the century progresses. For some protagonists, this is framed in very general terms, as when Edis Searle's Hetty Brewster feels the limitations of 'the quiet round of home duties' and dreams of doing 'a greater work for God' (Searle 1871: 362). For others, ambitions are more specific, as in Betham-Edwards' *Ally and Her School-Fellow* (1861), where the girls of Marigold House long to emulate Florence Nightingale and go to nurse soldiers wounded in the Crimea. While writers such as Susannah Paull continue to promote an exclusively domestic role for their female protagonists up until the end of the century, others publishing girls' books in the 1860s and 1870s acknowledge these broadening horizons as well as the growing need for many middle-class women to work. Of the twenty-two stories published between 1870 and 1880, a third feature a protagonist whose education is explicitly preparing her for teaching, while a further three portray girls who yearn to be boys, with the wider opportunities they believe that would bring. In these texts, as in those for boys of the same decade, there is an

increasing stress on the need for intellectual as well as moral formation as a prerequisite for usefulness in adulthood.

Women and the ideology of work

In both fictional and extra-literary texts, the positive representation of women actively engaged in domestic duties, paid employment or charitable ventures reflects the contemporary ideology of work espoused by many men. For example, in attempting to answer the question ‘What is Woman’s Work?’ Eliza Linton called upon women to renounce ‘idleness, *ennui*, and vagrant imagination’ and to embrace ‘active housekeeping’ as the work ‘into which they were born’ (*Saturday Review* February 15, 1868, 25(642): 197). Leisure too was considered an opportunity for useful activity. In her evidence to the Taunton Commission, Dorothea Beale described how the impoverished curriculum offered to many girls often failed to train them to make productive use of free time,¹⁴⁴ and the Assistant Commissioners themselves noted the ‘listless and purposeless’ character of the lives led by many young women of the middle classes before marriage (SIC vol. IX: 829). Other commentators deplored the rule of ‘frivolity and fashion’ (Wolstenholme-Elmy 1987: 149) to which girls of the wealthier classes were often subjected. To counteract the indolence and apathy generated by the lack of training for a purposeful life, advice manuals such as Lucy Phillipps’ *My Life and What Shall I Do with It?* (1860) urged girls to commit themselves to charitable activities. Others set out strategies for self-improvement through disciplined study. In their *Thoughts on Self-Culture* (1850), for instance, Maria Grey and Emily Shirreff set out a comprehensive programme for sustained ‘mental activity’ designed to foster women’s innate gifts and to eliminate the evils of idleness.

¹⁴⁴ See SIC vol. V: 735.

Critics of the *status quo* were at pains to show that participation in work beyond the home could actually help to shape the feminine character. In his treatise *Industrial and Social Position of Women* (1857), John Duguid Milne argued that the opportunity to fulfil useful public roles was essential to women's physical and mental health as well as to their economic well-being. Other campaigners for the opening up of employment opportunities for women saw work as enhancing their ability to fulfil their traditional role as well as giving economic security and a sense of purpose. Barbara Bodichon, for instance, asserted that 'WORK – not drudgery, but WORK – is the great beautifier. Activity of brain, heart, and limb, gives health and beauty, and makes women fit to be the mothers of children' (Lacey 1987: 44).

Conclusions

Questions about the preparation of upper- and middle-class pupils for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life underlie much nineteenth-century educational discourse and constitute an important focus in the contemporary school story. In fiction, as in non-fiction, pupils' futures are shown to be shaped by a number of factors, including the different opportunities open to boys and girls in this period and the quality of the schooling received. In addition, fiction frequently gives prominence to the aspirations and character of the individual child and explores the part played by friends and role models in facilitating the transition to adulthood.

Affirmation of established conventional gender roles and recognition of the concept of separate spheres underpin many fictional texts, especially in the first part of the period, and, as in *Hartfield*, serve as a means of transmitting traditional values to young readers. At the same time, some stories, such as *Cola Monti* and *Inez and Emmeline*, point towards the possibility of release from the constraints imposed by narrowly conceived adult roles by featuring

protagonists who disregard convention in their choice of occupation. Whilst children's fiction published before 1880 almost never¹⁴⁵ depicts girls undertaking professional work in the public sphere, these texts often portray strong women teachers, such as de Jongh's Mrs Radcliff, who, although running small schools on a domestic model, are committed to training their pupils for usefulness and for possible independence rather than for the 'display' condemned in so much non-fictional writing. Thus rather than providing an explicit critique of contemporary girls' schooling, the writers discussed here offer an alternative ideal of female education, rooted in a strong ideology of work and in the increasing recognition that pupils would often need to become self-supporting.

Stories for boys are generally more overt in their criticism of the failings of schools to equip pupils for adult life. For example, both Craik and Drayson highlight the irrelevance of a conventional classical education to the pursuit of many occupations. Drayson's depiction of Mr Hostler's Academy exposes the failure of such institutions to teach pupils to think for themselves and so prepare them for the demands of professional training and a subsequent career. Such criticism illustrates and reinforces many of the weaknesses documented by the Clarendon and Taunton Commissions. It is counter-balanced by increasing emphasis on the importance of a sound academic education as a foundation for entry to the university or a profession. This is seen particularly in later texts such as *Old Schoolfellows* and *Harold's Revenge*, as well as in *The Gentleman Cadet*. Inadequacies in provision for pupils' social and moral preparation for life beyond school constitute another recurring theme in boys' fiction, and in texts such as *How It Was Done at Stow School* are given more emphasis than weaknesses in academic education. Writers such as Henry Adams consistently challenge the

¹⁴⁵ As discussed in Chapter 5, an exception is the eponymous heroine of *Harrie; or, Schoolgirl Life in Edinburgh*, who is employed as a teaching assistant in the large school she also attends as a pupil.

assumption that institutions such as fagging and the monitorial system automatically fit pupils either for service or leadership in public life.

The nature and context of the adult roles for which boys and girls were destined in this period were very different, and had a significant impact on the content of the education they received. However, central to all the fictional texts discussed in this chapter is the notion of work as the context within which the individual character is shaped and developed, first at school, and then in the world beyond. Characters' aspirations are realised and validated by hard work and dedication, whilst goals motivated by the desire for a life of indolence and pleasure are shown to be worthless. The recurring theme of changing fortunes, which forces protagonists such as Leslie's Hartwell brothers and de Jongh's Dane sisters to earn a living rather than be dependent on their fathers, effectively reinforces the importance of identifying innate talent, developing skills and learning to work. For both sexes, 'work', whether confined within the domestic sphere, or pursued in the public arenas afforded by old and new professions, is shown in fiction to confer identity, validate calling, and redeem weakness.

Conclusion

As I noted at the beginning of this thesis, the school story has generally received a bad press. While commending Hughes for originality, and for ‘the bold and honest truthfulness’ of *Tom Brown*, the *Edinburgh Review* of February 1861 dismisses subsequent explorers of the world of school as mere purveyors of ‘travellers’ stories’ which bear no relation to life. Influential surveys of children’s literature continued to censure the school story for its lack of credibility well into the second half of the twentieth century. Frank Eyre’s *Children’s Books of the Twentieth Century* (1971) refers to it as ‘an artificial type’ and suggests that children’s books ‘would be better without it’ (82). Girls’ stories are the subject of particular disapproval. Margery Fisher (1961) charges Angela Brazil and her successors with ‘silliness and triviality’ (179), while Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig (1976) find the Chalet School stories both boring and ‘absurdly anachronistic’ (201).

In my research, I have set out to challenge such views as they relate to stories published between 1820 and 1880, following the approach adopted by more recent critics, such as Clark, Nelson and Reimer, who have sought to place the genre within its social and cultural context. I have examined fictional texts alongside a variety of non-literary sources in order to investigate the ways in which they represent and engage with current thinking and practice and serve to endorse, challenge or subvert it. In so doing, I have aimed to show the extent to which these stories are embedded in the educational culture of their time, consequently making an important contribution to contemporary debate while continuing to be of considerable historical interest.

My study shows that, at the most fundamental level, the school story depicts the broad range of schooling available to children of the middle and upper classes in the period under

consideration. The private academies, which historically catered for significant numbers of boys as well as for most girls, feature in many texts. The fictional portrayal of girls' schools in particular frequently mirrors the accounts found in contemporary biographies of writers such as Sewell and Sherwood, and in theoretical works, such as those by Bennet, Pendered and Sewell herself, which set out the principles of female education as they were conceived in the first half of the century.

Moreover, the grammar, proprietary and 'great' public schools are also well represented in fiction, with writers such as Adams, Fitzgerald, Hemyng and Hughes setting stories in identifiable historical establishments, and explicitly drawing on their own experiences as teachers and pupils. In addition, some stories depict the contribution made by home tuition to a pupil's total educational experience. The institutions portrayed are not exclusively élite, as critics often assume, but range from Hemyng's Eton, with its aristocratic clientèle, to Brown's Copsley School which provides a cheap, but 'thorough, practical middle-class education' (Brown 1874: 8) for the boys of a Midlands manufacturing town. The girls' schools include the large Dunedin Institution attended by Harrie Jardine as well as small seminaries typified by Mrs Anderson's Avenue House. Nor is the picture of schooling offered by these texts static. While the domestic model of schooling persisted throughout the period under consideration, boys' stories in particular reflect the growth of large schools run on the model of Rugby and Eton. Although *Harrie* (1877) appears to be unique among books published before 1880 in featuring one of the new academic schools for girls, its witness to the changes taking place in female education is highly significant because it points to the further developments in the genre initiated by L.T. Meade and Amy Clarke in the 1880s and 1890s. In the later part of the century, stories for both boys and girls depict the growing emphasis on

sound academic training as a necessary foundation for productive adult life, a trend which is clearly discernible in the treatment of training for the military discussed in Chapter 6.

My research has also shown that far from simply providing a background for a story, these school settings offer a means of engagement with the key educational dilemmas and debates of the day. In advocating a New Historicist approach to the reading of Maria Edgeworth's stories, Mitzi Myers defines its aim as being 'to demonstrate how a work of historical children's literature not only reflects its period's concerns, but how it comments on its social and intellectual milieu, [...] how it functions as a cultural critique of educational practice' (1989: 52). Reading extra-literary texts alongside fiction has revealed the extent to which the writers of school stories were concerned to address both the broad issues of moral, social, intellectual and physical formation for both sexes which are the focus of the main chapters in this thesis, and the challenges for educational policy and practice identified and documented in such detail by the two Royal Commissions as well as by practitioners, politicians and academics. Thus questions of school organisation and discipline, curriculum, health and fitness, and preparation for useful adult life are central to many stories, as my examination of specific texts demonstrates. Farrar's focus in his fiction on teaching methods and the content of learning, for example, mirrors the concerns recorded in the report of the Clarendon Commission, as well as those he expressed in numerous lectures, papers and sermons. Similarly, consideration of the relative merits and shortcomings of the domestic model of education is central to such stories as Sewell's *Laneton Parsonage* (1846-49) and Buckland's *Lily and Nannie* (1868), and reflects issues raised in theoretical works, such as those by Broadhurst and Sewell, as well as in the reports of the Taunton Commissioners, and in debate conducted through the columns of the periodical press.

However, as Myers indicates, a New Historicist reading of texts seeks to go beyond the consideration of ways in which fiction reflects contemporary concerns in order to examine how it provides a critique of educational practice and offers comment on its wider social and cultural context. It is clear from my investigation that many nineteenth-century writers of school fiction use the medium quite deliberately to address controversial issues, as Adams does to explore the merits and defects of the monitorial system in *The Boys of Westonbury* (1878), or Sewell to consider the advantages and disadvantages of home education in *Laneton Parsonage*. The treatment of such issues is rarely neutral. Some texts, such as Hooper's *Mrs Anderson's School* (1851) and Melly's *School Experiences of a Fag* (1854), aim explicitly to commend a particular form of schooling – in these instances the young ladies' seminary and the 'great' public school – and they do this partly by specifying the shortcomings of the alternatives. Thus Hooper uses her Preface to denigrate both home schooling and the new women's colleges, while Melly contrasts life at the idealised 'Harby' with that at a badly-run private academy. In *Frank Vansittart* (1853), Sinclair uses dramatic dialogue to present arguments for and against specific educational approaches, while simultaneously illustrating their varying outcomes through her characterisation of the three protagonists.

Many others choose to address the weaknesses they identify in the schools of the period much more directly. Some, particularly those dealing with topics of immediate public concern, are overtly polemical. Hence the Hopley case of 1860¹⁴⁶ led to the prompt publication of several anti-flogging stories, including Adams' *Schoolboy Honour* (1861) and E.P.'s *Solomon's Precept* (1861). Such expression of opposition to the widespread use of corporal punishment is increasingly common in texts of the 1860s and 1870s, and is indicative of one

¹⁴⁶ See Chapter 3 for discussion of this case.

way in which fiction was in conflict with much prevailing opinion. For example, the Clarendon Commissioners questioned its use only at Winchester, and a Bill designed to protect children from ‘irregular and cruel treatment’ was withdrawn from the Commons in 1863 on the grounds that it was ‘unnecessary’.¹⁴⁷

Fagging, and the bullying it was designed to counteract, is another aspect of the culture of boys’ schools which is frequently the subject of direct attack in fiction. Drayson, for instance, uses the first-person narrative in *The Gentleman Cadet* (1875) to express and censure the negative impact of these practices on students at the Royal Military Academy. In *The Ground Ash* (1874), Pullen uses a series of discussions between the different participants in the protagonist’s education to expose the flaws in arguments which make the rod, rather than the gospel, the source of authority within a school which purports to train ‘Christian gentlemen’, closing his story with an account of the boy’s death as result of the monitors’ abuse of power. Adams’ vivid characterisation of relationships between fags and monitors at his fictional Halminster and Westonbury is similarly designed to highlight the capacity of the monitorial system to damage both younger and older boys.

The inadequacies of girls’ schools are also the subject of overt criticism. The author of *Harriette Browne’s School-Days* (1859) allies polemic with irony to expose the inefficiency and pretentiousness of two quite different establishments, both of which exhibit the serious shortcomings in female education highlighted in the work of Beale, Buss, Wolstenholme and others, and documented in the reports of the Taunton Commissioners. Mayhew’s *Letters Left at the Pastrycook’s* (1857) similarly uses sharp irony to highlight both the deficiencies in provision for girls, and the contradictions in thinking about gender roles underlying them.

¹⁴⁷ See C. Shroobree, *Public Schools and Private Education* (1988): 23 for details of this debate.

In offering a critique of current practice, some fiction also proposes solutions to the problems it exposes. In a number of instances, the narrative is used to exemplify and commend good pedagogical practice. Farrar's Mr Percival, who supplements the classics with lessons in English literature and natural history, models an approach to teaching and the curriculum which Farrar himself adopted at Harrow,¹⁴⁸ and advocated in his theoretical writings. He uses the character of Mr Percival to demonstrate the potential impact of these methods on the motivation, achievement and conduct of his pupils, even those who, like Walter Evson, are initially regarded as stupid. The use of story, discussed in Chapter 1, is another tool shown to be effective in capturing the interest and imagination of children, and is illustrated in texts as different as *Eight Evenings at School* (1825) and *Mr Johnston's School* (1867), a book which also portrays the pleasures and benefits derived from learning from observation and experience. The importance of understanding what is taught, in contrast to the rote learning characteristic of many schools, is epitomised in the approach adopted by Searle's Miss Power in *Maggie's Mistake* (1874). This leads even the recalcitrant protagonist to resolve to stop wasting her time at school, and to spend at least an hour on a lesson before giving up.

In other texts, my research shows that the narrative is used explicitly to recommend and justify a specific remedy for deficiencies and abuses identified and documented in the press and in biographies and autobiographies as well as in official reports. In *The Life and Adventures of George Wilson, a Foundation Scholar* (1854), George Griffith attacks the misuse of endowments in the free grammar schools which were increasingly educating 'the sons of opulent persons' (vii) rather than the poor boys for whom they had been founded. In his Preface he presents the work as 'an agent' (xvii) in securing reform in this and other areas

¹⁴⁸ See Reginald Farrar's *Life of Frederic William Farrar* (1904): 84-6 for a pupil's account of his father's teaching methods at Harrow.

of education. The anonymous author of *Solomon's Precept* concludes his story with a call for 'a permanent board of commissioners' to inspect private schools regularly, and to penalise teachers guilty of 'the cruelty, rapacity and neglect now existing in so many schools' (1861: 141-2). The Introduction to *How It Was Done at Stow School* (1862) recommends the setting up of an official committee comparable to the Public Schools Commission to enquire into standards and conditions in the private schools. Farrar's *Eric* (1858) is in part conceived as a statement of the merits of the monitorial system, while, as indicated earlier, Adams' *The Boys of Westonbury* (1878) highlights its shortcomings and calls for its reform and regulation. Kingston also indicates the advantages of delegating responsibility to carefully chosen monitors in *Digby Heathcote* (1860), but both here, and in *Ernest Bracebridge* (1860), stresses the efficacy of organised games as a remedy for bullying and anti-social behaviour.

Such consideration of issues central to current educational policy and practice is a fundamental characteristic of the nineteenth-century school story. However, in representing and offering a critique of a wide variety of approaches to schooling, it is clear from my research that fiction goes beyond this in commenting upon the wider social context in which the schools operated, and upon the cultural norms which underpinned them. For example, many texts, as discussed in Chapter 6, explicitly validate the prevailing gospel of work. Gender expectations, as Chapter 3 shows, are treated less consistently, with fiction used both to support and challenge the concept of muscular Christianity and the ideal of the angel in the house. An important means of expressing social comment is through the use of school as a metaphor for the family on one hand, and the wider world on the other, creating important opportunities for the exploration and examination of the adult roles for which education was seen as a preparation.

While the image of the school as a family occurs in some books for boys, it is found most commonly in stories aimed at girls where it reflects the rationale for female education as preparation for marriage and motherhood that is articulated in numerous extra-literary texts, including the prospectuses and advertisements issued by the establishments themselves. Its usage offers several perspectives on the concept of a separate female sphere in which women's roles are confined to those of wife and homemaker. Some stories, such as Hall's *Tales of the School Room* (1830) and Hooper's *Recollections of Mrs Anderson's School*, use the image to endorse these roles quite overtly, showing how the 'mothering' of a headmistress, or the opportunities to show sisterly care for a fellow pupil, not only help to foster a protagonist's feminine qualities, but also prepare her for an approved adult role. Yet even such conservative texts show that such a role is not available to all, and, through the portrayal of adults who work for a living, such as Hooper's 'poor Miss Allen' and Mrs Anderson herself, implicitly challenge the limited expectations of the place of women in wider society. Much more explicitly, texts such as Mayhew's *Letters Left at the Pastry Cook's* show how pupils' imitation of familial roles in school serves as a means of perpetuating the gender inequality underlying the institution of marriage. Mayhew's 'wives' find themselves stripped of personal property, just as all married women were before the passing of the Married Women's Property Act in 1870. Moreover, they are consigned to the performance of domestic tasks which are considerably less romantic than the 'sweet ordering' undertaken by Ruskin's queens in their gardens. In contrast, Mayhew's 'husbands' wield apparently limitless power over those unfortunate enough to be chosen as their wives and children.

The depiction of the school as a 'little world' is also a feature of books for both sexes, although it is used with particular frequency in stories for boys. As Mavis Reimer points out in her discussion of this metaphor as a defining characteristic of the school story, it is 'also

embedded in the traditions of actual schools [...] and the discourses about them' (Reimer 2009: 211-2). In interpreting its use, she states: 'It is a figure that asserts that a school is a complex and circumscribed system, but at the same time a figure that implies the correspondence of the school system to 'world' systems on other scales and levels' (211). Thus, as discussed in Chapter 3, boys' schools sought to replicate the structures of the wider society in order to teach skills and attitudes considered essential in public life. As one headmaster explained to his pupils, 'To bear and forebear is what we all have to do, and we learn the alphabet of this in the tiny world of a school' (Norman 1864: 218-9).

Since the organisation of boys' schools was designed to allow pupils to practise adult roles and relationships in order to prepare for positions of power and leadership, an important function of the image of the school as a miniature world is to represent and comment on issues relating to citizenship and government in contemporary society. In some instances, as in Hughes' portrayal of Arnold's Rugby, the school may offer a model to the leaders of a nation embroiled in conflict at home and abroad.¹⁴⁹ Citing Arnold as the ideal ruler, the young master comments, ' "Perhaps ours is the only little corner of the British Empire which is thoroughly wisely and strongly ruled just now" ' (1857: 395). Earlier in the same text, however, where Arnold is still struggling to implement his reforms, the school is shown to reflect the inequalities and tensions found in the outside world, with weak rule identified as the root cause of injustice and unrest. A situation of 'no-government' (183) is described, in which general disorder is 'much like the big world [...], matters going generally in a queer, cross-grained way' (112). While the custom of fagging is, in Arnold's own words, intended to instil 'quickness, handiness, thoughtfulness, and punctuality' (Arnold 1845: 376) as well as

¹⁴⁹ Although set earlier, *Tom Brown* was written and against the background of unrest and mutiny in India as well as industrial and economic protest at home.

discipline into younger boys, it also teaches Tom and his contemporaries to defy authority when it is wielded ineptly, and to rebel when power is usurped by those who abuse it. The text can thus be read as a commentary on the sources of social inequality and disorder as well as on the best way to run a large boarding school.

Reimer suggests that such links between the text and its social and historical context tie it to ‘ideologies of the nation’ (215), and certainly they supply a context in which boys such as Tom Brown move from school to ‘work in the world’ (403), whether at home or in the outposts of empire. However, the metaphor of the world is used in some texts in a more abstract sense to denote a place of temptation and moral and spiritual danger. Arnold, for example, spoke to his pupils of the ‘world’ as all that is ‘opposed to God’ (1833: 48), exerting its power to corrupt in the school as well as in society beyond, so that only a few weeks after leaving home many boys had ‘already learnt the first lesson in the devil’s school to laugh at what is good’ (48). Farrar’s fiction provides what is perhaps the strongest representation of school life in these terms. In *Eric* he goes so far as to characterise the lower forms at Roslyn as ‘a Pandemonium of evil passions and despicable habits’ (1858: 202), a comparison his critics considered to be seriously misleading to both parents and pupils.¹⁵⁰ However, Farrar clearly believed that one function of a public school was to provide an environment in which boys could learn to recognise and resist the immorality they would meet beyond school. He uses the character of Mr Rose, one of his model schoolmasters, to elucidate this view in an exhortation to Eric.

‘The true preparation for life, the true basis of a manly character, is not to have been ignorant of evil, but to have known it and avoided it; not to have been sheltered from temptation, but to have passed through it and overcome it [...] It is quite possible to be *in* the little world of school, and yet not of it’. (1858: 197)

¹⁵⁰ See ‘Public School Education’, *Quarterly Review* 108: 216 (1860: Oct.): 388.

Eric's misfortune is his failure to overcome the temptations to which school life exposes him, and he moves inexorably from the corrupt but relatively contained world of Roslyn to a world where he suffers brutal exploitation at the hands of men 'of the lowest and coarsest grade' (361). The main protagonists in *St Winifred's* (1862) are more fortunate, and, strengthened by moral and spiritual struggle, contribute to the reformation of the school, leaving it in a 'well governed and high toned' condition.

The application of a New Historicist perspective to fictional texts, considering them alongside non-literary 'co-texts', has therefore enabled me to discover and demonstrate the capacity of the school story – often dismissed as a formulaic and conservative genre – to engage with and provide a serious critique of nineteenth-century schooling, and, by implication, the world beyond it. What is less clear from the reading of these texts is the degree to which the fictional representation of current educational issues, and its concern to offer remedies for the problems it identifies, directly helped to shape the changes in schooling which occurred during the period under consideration. As indicated in my Introduction, contemporary reviews of texts such as *Tom Brown* and *Eric* certainly gave rise to comment in the periodical press on the merits and shortcomings of the public schools, and can be seen as stimulating further the widespread public interest in educational matters, thus contributing to the promotion of what Holt has identified as 'some kind of agenda for [...] reform' (2008: 209). Subsequently the school story has been widely credited by Richards, Quigley and others with disseminating many of the principles underlying the development of the modern public school. An examination of the extent to which it accomplishes this is beyond the scope of this project, but is a pertinent subject for future research.

The precise extent of their educational influence aside, the reading of school stories alongside non-literary discourses confirms their continuing importance as social and historical documents. The question which remains relates to their value as works of literature. In a review of Greenblatt's *Learning to Curse* (1990), Anne Barton draws attention to what she terms 'the perils of historicism' (Barton 1991: 53). Chief among these is its capacity to place less emphasis on a work of literature as a whole than on the cultural, social and political movements by which it is shaped and to which it responds, so that complex texts such as *The Tempest* and *The Faerie Queen* which speak to a twenty-first century as well as to a Renaissance audience are 'nearly lost to sight' among a profusion of contextual material and 'are reduced to sites from which resonance emanates' (56). Such criticism makes it important to ask whether a New Historicist reading of nineteenth-century school fiction encourages an interpretation which, by focusing on historical connections, obscures or ignores its characteristics as literature able to transcend its context and to speak to the experience of child readers.

As indicated at the outset of this thesis, writers of school stories habitually employ conventional literary devices to convey an educational viewpoint. The extensive use of metaphor discussed above is one such strategy. Recurring images of the school as a little world, or as home, family, wilderness or battleground, all serve to further understanding of the complexities of the school as a social entity, and to point to some of the incongruities in the ideologies underlying much educational practice. Another important technique is the exploitation of narrative perspective. In many texts the account of school life is focalised principally through the figure of the young protagonist, enabling the writer to explore the subjective experience of schooling as well as using his or her authorial voice to comment on its context more objectively. A few texts, of which Martineau's *The Crofton Boys* (1841) is the most notable, rely entirely on a close psychological

study of a child character to engage with broader educational issues. In many respects, therefore, literary technique is crucial to the expression of a particular educational viewpoint.

As imaginative works of literature, it is evident that school stories were popular with nineteenth-century readers. As mentioned in the Introduction, *Tom Brown* and *Eric* were reprinted numerous times throughout the second half of the century, but other texts also enjoyed notable success. Although its circulation never equalled that of *Eric*, Farrar's *St Winifred's* (1862) reached its nineteenth edition in 1894. *The Crofton Boys* was reissued at least 14 times between 1841 and 1896, while May's *Louis' School Days* (1851) was republished eight times before 1876. Girls' stories were also successful. Seven new editions of Sewell's *Laneton Parsonage* (1846-1849) had appeared by 1857, while Worboise's *Grace Hamilton* (1856) was reprinted within a year of first publication. Although the periodical press dismissed the school story as an unrealistic genre, Charlotte Yonge did not hesitate to recommend several titles in her advice to adults on what books to lend and give to young people.¹⁵¹ For example, she praised Keary's *Sidney Grey* (1857) as being 'a story of much excellence and reality' (Yonge 1887: 39). She regarded *The Crofton Boys* as '[a] very attractive story' (32), and applauded the liveliness of Ascott R. Hope's stories of school life. As well as having the ability to entertain, she indicated that the 'wholesome' spirit of such books could be morally uplifting for their readers, while others, including *Laneton Parsonage*, offered sound religious instruction as well as an interesting narrative.

A focus on the contribution of the nineteenth-century school story to contemporary educational debate, and its continuing historical interest, should not therefore be seen as obscuring its significance as a literary genre which was clearly attractive to child readers. By embedding fiction in its historical context, the writers of early school fiction created a world which was both

¹⁵¹ Charlotte M. Yonge. *What Books to Lend and What to Give*. London: National Society's Repository, 1887.

credible and recognisable to adults and children alike. This helped to validate the story not only as a commentary on educational principles and practice, but also as a vehicle for entertaining and teaching young readers of the day. There is an inextricable link between the setting and the messages conveyed in these texts. Many of the lessons they transmit are concerned with growing up, with making independent moral choices, with learning to manage relationships, and with preparing to assume the roles and responsibilities expected of adults. Stories rooted in the familiar world of school enable readers to negotiate the challenges of the present, whether these come in the guise of temptations to cheat in lessons, or of the attentions of the bully, and to engage with both fears and aspirations for the future, so often defined by roles learnt in the classroom and the playground.

The continuing popularity of the school story, in the face of much criticism, would therefore appear to derive from its representation of what Sheila Ray has termed ‘one of the almost universal experiences of childhood’ (Ray 1996: 358), and its firm location of that experience within the culture of its day. My reading of early texts alongside other educational discourses has provided a means of accessing and appreciating a forgotten corpus of literature. The interplay of story and context which they exhibit continues today in fiction which, in the work of writers such as J.K. Rowling, Gillian Cross and Adèle Geras, still addresses questions of educational policy and practice while also focusing on issues relating to growing up, dealing with relationships, forming aspirations and making choices within different kinds of schools. As Sue Sims has remarked in a robust rebuttal of rumours of the death of the school story, ‘[A]s long as school is a fact of life for children, school will remain part of their literature’ (Sims and Clare 2000: 18).

Appendix

Bibliography of British School Stories, 1820-1880

The compilation of a bibliography of stories depicting secondary schooling in Britain between 1820 and 1880 constitutes a crucial component of my research. As noted in the Introduction, the compilers of existing bibliographies of this body of texts, such as those included in the two-volume *Encyclopaedia of School Stories* (2000), acknowledge their incompleteness and point to the need for further work to recover forgotten titles. Such work is important both as a means of extending understanding and appreciation of the range of texts published in a period neglected in studies of the school story to date, and as a tool for establishing a more accurate basis for research into early school fiction. While my immediate concern has been to construct a secure bibliographical basis for my own inquiry, it has also been my intention to produce a resource for other researchers in the field which can be made available online on the NCRCL website.

The limitations of bibliographical work in this area are attributable to a number of factors. Matthew Grenby (2005) has drawn attention to the delay in cataloguing children's books in the major collections and in making the records available on-line. In Cambridge University Library, for example, this task was not completed until 2010, while the Bodleian's Opie Collection was not included in the library's main catalogue until relatively recently. Smaller public holdings, such as the Marcus Crouch Collection in Kent, which contains some rare nineteenth-century texts, remain uncatalogued and difficult to access, while other relevant titles are likely to be in private hands. In the Bodleian, at least, children's books were not classified as such until 1870, being recorded in old hand-lists and shelved alongside mainstream fiction. Thus searching the stacks, a strategy adopted by Sims and Clare in their

work on *The Encyclopaedia of Girls' School Stories*, has not proved a productive means of identifying older texts. Finally, it must be noted that many books and records were lost permanently as a result of fire and bomb damage during WW2. For example, the offices and warehouse of the United Society for Christian Literature (formerly the Religious Tract Society) were completely burnt out in 1941. Part of the library at the British Museum was also destroyed, leading to the loss of some 200,000 volumes. While I have been able to take advantage of the recent improvements in the catalogues of the major British libraries and the ongoing expansion of Copac in carrying out my own bibliographical searches, constraints on tracing texts remain. While I have succeeded in discovering over forty books not listed elsewhere, my bibliography will inevitably have omissions and errors.

I have used a number of approaches to identify titles relevant to my research, which, as stated in the Introduction, is concerned with British stories set in schools providing education in what would now be termed the secondary phase. I have followed Kirkpatrick (1990: 4) in including only titles where issues relating to school life are central to the story, and generally occupy at least one third of the text. Taking the work of Grey (1968), Kirkpatrick (1990, 2000, 2001 and 2006), and Sims and Clare (2000) as a starting point, I evaluated and collated entries in existing bibliographies, excluding books featuring elementary schools, those focusing on the work of governesses, and those by non-British authors. While most texts listed are full-length novels, I included collections of short stories where the majority are concerned with school life. I then identified further titles through visiting and searching specialist collections held by libraries such as the Bodleian, and through undertaking key-word searches of major catalogues, principally via Copac. In addition, I searched the online catalogues of the Osborne Collection in Toronto and the Cotsen Library at Princeton. The scrutiny of nineteenth-century publishing records and advertisements, such as the listings included in the back of many

books, also proved informative. Finally, informal contact with a number of collectors and sellers of children's books has yielded additional suggestions. It has been possible to examine almost all the titles included in the bibliography, ensuring that they meet my research criteria. In all, I have identified 164 stories for boys and sixty-nine for girls. Seven of those for boys and thirty-five for girls do not appear in existing bibliographies. Most significantly, I have substantially expanded the basis for the study of early school stories for girls, more than doubling the number of titles listed by Sims and Clare.

Entries in the bibliography consist of author, title, publisher, and place and date of first publication. Reprints are listed only when these were issued under a new title or by a different publisher within the period under consideration. A number of books were published anonymously or under pseudonyms. Where the writer has subsequently been identified, for instance in the British Library catalogue, I have placed the author's name in brackets. Pseudonyms have been noted where relevant. In a very few instances, a book's publisher is not cited, and these are recorded as 'n.p'. Where books are undated, catalogue entries sometimes give the date of accession rather than that of publication. In these cases I have placed the date in square brackets.

Boys' School Stories 1820-1880

Adams, Charlotte. *Edgar Clifton; or, Right and Wrong. A Story of School Life*. Bath: Binns and Goodwin, 1852.

Adams, Charlotte. *The Etonian, and Geoffrey Selwood. Two Tales*. London: L. Booth, 1841.

Adams, Henry Cadwallader. *Barford Bridge; or, Schoolboy Trials*. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1868.

Adams, Henry Cadwallader. *The Boys of Westonbury; or, The Monitorial System*. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1878.

- Adams, Henry Cadwallader. *The Chief of the School; or, Schoolboy Ambition. A Tale of Nethercourt*. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1874.
- Adams, Henry Cadwallader. *The Doctor's Birthday; or, The Force of Example. A Third Tale of Charlton School*. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1873.
- Adams, Henry Cadwallader. *The First of June; or, Schoolboy Rivalry: A Second Tale of Charlton School*. London: Rivingtons, 1856.
- Adams, Henry Cadwallader. *The Indian Boy*. London: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, 1865.
- Adams, Henry Cadwallader. *The Lost Rifle; or, Schoolboy Faction: A Second Tale of Nethercourt*. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1876.
- Adams, Henry Cadwallader. *Schoolboy Honour: A Tale of Halminster College*. London: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, 1861.
- Adams, Henry Cadwallader. *Walter's Friend; or, Big Boys and Little Ones: A Fourth Tale of Charlton School*. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1873.
- Adams, Henry Cadwallader. *The White Brunswickers; or, Reminiscences of School Life*. London: Routledge, Warne and Routledge, 1865.
- Adams, Henry Cadwallader. *The Winborough Boys; or, Ellerslie Park*. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1872.
- Adams, Henry Cadwallader. *Wroxby College; or, The Luscombe Prize. A Tale of Boy Life*. George Routledge and Sons, 1874.
- Adams, William and Henry Cadwallader Adams. *The Cherry Stones; or, Charlton School. A Tale for Youth*. London: Francis and John Rivington, 1851.
- Alexander, James W. *Truth and Love; or Schoolboys and Their Teachers*. London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1860. Reissued as *School-Boy Heroes: the Story of Maurice Gray and Carl Adler*. London and Edinburgh: T. Nelson and Sons, 1872.
- Anonymous. *The Adventures of a School-Boy. A Tale*. London: W. Jackson & Co., 1826.
- Anonymous. *Angels' Work; or, The Choristers of St Marks, and Two Other Tales*. London: John Henry Parker, 1848.
- Anonymous. *The Children of Hazlewood School: Ill Conduct at Church*. London: James Burns, 1840.
- Anonymous. *Donald's Hamper*. London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1867.

Anonymous. *Eight Years a Blue Coat Boy; or, Dundalker's Schooldays. A Narration of Fact.* London; Aylesbury: Dean and Son, [1877].

Anonymous. *Fire-Side Stories; or, Recollections of My School-Fellows.* London: Harvey and Darton, 1825.

Anonymous. *Frank Martin; or, A Schoolboy's Trials and Victories. A Tale for the Young.* London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1874.

Anonymous. *Frank Netherton; or, The Talisman.* London: Religious Text Society, [1847].

Anonymous. *The Friends; or, The Triumph of Innocence over False Charges. A Tale Founded on Facts.* London: Harvey and Darton, 1822.

Anonymous. *Grundy's; or, Harry's First Half.* London: Printed for the Author by Robert Hardwicke, 1860.

Anonymous. *Harry Maxwell; or, School Boy Honour: and Other Stories.* London; Paris; New York: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co., 1880.

Anonymous. *Harry's Battles: and How He Fought Them.* London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1850.

Anonymous. *How It Was Done at Stow School.* London: Hamilton, Adams and Co., 1862.

Anonymous. *Hugh Wynford; or, The Cousin's Revenge.* London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, [1866].

Anonymous. *In School and Out of School.* London: William Jones, 1825.

Anonymous. *Maurice Guildford; or, The Trials of a Small Boy.* London: Religious Tract Society, 1867.

Anonymous. *My Old Pupils.* London: Arthur Hall, Virtue and Co., 1849.

Anonymous. *My School-Boy Days.* London: Religious Tract Society, [1844].

Anonymous. *My Youthful Companions.* London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1846.

Anonymous. *Old Gingerbread and the Schoolboys.* London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1858.

Anonymous. *Old Schoolfellows, and What Became of Them.* London: Religious Tract Society, [1871].

Anonymous. *Ralph Saunders; or, The School-Boy Friends.* London: The Book Society, [1863].

- Anonymous. *Reminiscences of School Life. A Story for Boys*. London: Routledge, Warne and Routledge, 1864.
- Anonymous. *Robert Marshall; or, The Cleverest Boy in the School*. London: James Burns, 1842.
- Anonymous. *School Pictures, Drawn from Life*. London: Religious Tract Society, [1876].
- Anonymous. *The Schoolboy and the Angel; or, Think and Thank*. London: n.p., 1868.
- Anonymous. *School-Boy Life and Incident*. London: Strahan and Company, 1880.
- Anonymous. *The Schoolmaster's Warning. A Tale*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, [1865].
- Anonymous. *Strive and Thrive; or, Stories for the Examples and Encouragement of the Young*. London; Edinburgh; New York: T. Nelson and Sons, 1875.
- Anonymous. *Tales and Pictures of School Life*. London: Religious Tract Society, 1869.
- Anonymous. *Tales of the Academy*. Series I. London: Printed for Cowie and Co., 1820.
- Anonymous. *Tales of the Academy*. Series II. London: Printed for Cowie and Co., 1821.
- Anonymous. *Walter and the Prize; and Other Stories*. London: Religious Tract Society, 1862.
- Atkinson, J.C. *Playhours and Half-Holidays; or, Further Experiences of Two Schoolboys*. London, New York: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, 1860.
- Atkinson, J.C. *Stanton Grange; or, At a Private Tutor's*. London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1864.
- Atkinson, J.C. *Walks, Talks, Travels and Exploits of Two Schoolboys: A Book for Boys*. London; New York: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge: 1859.
- Barnard, Mrs Henry. *Dick's First School-Days: A Story for Little Boys*. London: James Nisbet and Co., 1875.
- Bell, Catherine D. *Self-Mastery; or, Kenneth and Hugh*. Edinburgh: William P. Kennedy, 1857.
- Betham-Edwards, Matilda. *Charlie and Ernest; or, Play and Work: A Story of Hazlehurst School*. Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1859.
- (Bickersteth, Emily.) *School and Home; or, Leaves from a Boy's Journal. A Tale for Schoolboys*. London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1864.
- (Bockett, Benjamin Bradney.) *Our School; or, Scraps and Scrapes in Schoolboy Life, by Oliver Oldfellow*. London: John Wesley, 1857.

- (Bowen, C.E.) *Herbert's First Year at Bramford*. London: S.W. Partridge & Co., [1871].
- Bowles, Emily. *Floreat Etona. A True Story*. London: Robson, Levey, & Franklyn, 1861.
- Brown, Tom. *A Year at School*. London; New York: George Routledge and Sons, [1874].
- Bruce, Charles. *Leslie Ross; or, Fond of a Lark*. Edinburgh: W.P. Nimmo. 1871.
- Burbury, Mrs E.J. *The Grammar School Boys: A Tale of School-Boy Life*. London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1854.
- Camden, Charles. *The Boys of Axelford*. London: Bell & Daldy, 1869.
- (Charles, H. Frederick.) *The Boys of Highfield; or, The Hero of Chancery House*. London: Religious Tract Society, [1878].
- (Charles, H. Fredrick.) *Osgood's Rebellion, and What Became of It; or, Days at Westbrook College*. London: Religious Tract Society, [1877].
- Clarke, Benjamin. *Pounceford Hall: A Story of School Life*. London: Sunday School Union, [1875].
- Craik, Dinah Maria Mulock. *Cola Monti; or, The Story of a Genius*. London: Arthur Hall, [1849]. Reissued as *Bright Schemes and Bold Strokes*. London: Dean and Sons, 1860.
- Cupples, Anne Jane. *Hugh Wellwood's Success; or, Where There's a Will There's a Way*. London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1869.
- (Daryl, Sidney.) ('An Old Harrovian'.) *Hugh Russell at Harrow: A Sketch of School Life*. London: Provost and Co., 1880.
- De Morgan, Sophia Elizabeth and Jacob Abbott. *The Secret Society*. London; New York: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, [1866].
- Drayson, Alfred Wilks. *The Gentleman Cadet: his Career and Adventures at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. A Tale of the Past*. London: Griffith and Farran, 1875.
- E, P. *Solomon's Precept; or, The Power of the Rod. A Tale of the Flogging System*. London: 1861.
- Eiloart, Elizabeth. *Ernie at School: and What Came of his Going There*. London; New York: George Routledge and Sons, 1867.
- Elwes, Alfred. *Luke Ashleigh; or, School Life in Holland*. London: Griffith and Farran, 1864.
- F.M, S. *King Jack of Haylands: A Tale of School Life*. London; Edinburgh; New York: T. Nelson and Sons, 1868.

- Farrar, Frederic William. *Eric; or, Little by Little. A Tale of Roslyn School*. Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1858.
- (Farrar, Frederic William.) *St Winifred's; or, The World of School*. Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1862.
- Fitzgerald, Percy Hetherington. *Pictures of School Life and Boyhood: Selected from the Best Authors*. London; Paris; New York: Cassell, Petter & Galpin, 1873.
- (Fitzgerald, Percy Hetherington.) ('One of the Boys'.) *School Days at Saxonhurst*. Edinburgh: A. & C. Blackie, 1867.
- (Gale, Frederick.) ('A Wykehamist'). *The Public School Matches, and Those We Meet There*. London: John Chapman, 1853.
- (Gale, Frederick.) ('A Wykehamist'). *Ups and Downs of a Public School*. London; Edinburgh; Dublin: W. & F.G. Cash, 1856.
- (Gordon, Mary Charlotte, and Algernon Charles Swinburne.) *The Children of the Chapel: A Tale*. London: Joseph Masters, 1864.
- Griffith, George. *The Life and Adventures of George Wilson, A Foundation Scholar*. London: W. & F.G. Cash, 1854.
- Hall, Anna Maria. *Daddy Dacre's School: A Story for the Young*. London; New York: G. Routledge Co., 1859.
- Hemyng, Bracebridge. *Butler Burke at Eton*. London: John Maxwell and Company, 1865.
- (Hemyng, Bracebridge.) *Eton School Days*. London: John Maxwell and Company, 1864.
- Hewlett, Esther, (later Copley). *The Old Man's Head; or, Youthful Recollections*. London: William Darton, 1824.
- Heygate, W.E. *Godfrey Davenant: A Tale of School Life*. London: Joseph Masters, 1847.
- Heygate, W.E. *Godfrey Davenant at College*. London: Joseph Masters, 1847.
- HIB. *The Scholastic Academy of Professor Bruhm: Showing How the Members of the Academy-Board Were Managed by Mrs Nonconformia Bruhm, and How, Accordingly, They Managed Their Affairs*. London: Marlborough, 1872.
- Higginson, Charles Frederick. *Leslie's Scholarship; or, The Secret of Success*. London: Religious Tract Society, 1877.

- Hope, Ascott R. (Pseudonym of Ascott Robert Hope Moncrieff.) *Arthur Fortescue; or, The Schoolboy Hero*. Edinburgh; London: Johnstone, Hunter, & Co.; Hamilton, Adams, & Co., [1865].
- Hope, Ascott R. *A Book about Boys*. Edinburgh: William P. Nimmo, 1868.
- Hope, Ascott R. *A Book about Dominies: Being the Reflections and Recollections of Member of the Profession*. Edinburgh: William P. Nimmo, 1867.
- Hope, Ascott R. *George's Enemies: A Sequel to 'My Schoolboy Friends'*. Edinburgh: William P. Nimmo, 1872.
- Hope, Ascott R. *The Lycée Boys; or, School Life in France*. Edinburgh; London: William Oliphant: Hamilton, Adams, & Co., 1865.
- Hope, Ascott R. *My Schoolboy Friends: A Story of Whitminster Grammar School*. Edinburgh: William P. Nimmo, 1870.
- Hope, Ascott R. *Oudendale: A Story of Schoolboy Life*. London: William Macintosh, 1865.
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